October 2021

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Photo: Thomas Kouh

Radiant Sapphire

Wellborn's newest paint color is a true jewel! "Sapphire" is a mid-tone blue that compliments any space and looks great combined with other finishes like in the kitchen above. Welcome this gem into your home on any of your favorite Wellborn door styles in Maple, Oak or WellCore MDF.

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The Invisible Workplace Crisis

THERE'S LITTLE DOUBT that COVID-19 has radically transformed the residential remodeling, housing and kitchen/bath landscape.

For one thing, remodeling demand is reportedly at record highs, with both short- and long-term forecasts overwhelmingly positive. At the same time, new lifestyles emerging as byproducts of the global pandemic are proving responsible for the current mindset driving home design, product preferences and consumer purchases. Homes have literally been transformed, doubling in many cases as offices, schools, playgrounds and multi-generational residences. Wellness, sanitization, biophilic design and an emphasis on outdoor living have become more pronounced than ever. Multi-functional kitchens and eco-inspired baths remain high on the list of remodeling projects favored by homeowners.

But there's more to the impact of the coronavirus than simply that.

"Business owners and trade associations have a key role to play when it comes to mitigating the 'invisible' mental health crisis pervading today's workplace."

Businesses on every rung of the product-distribution chain have been forced in the past 18 months to essentially reinvent themselves, implementing virus-mitigation strategies ranging from masking and showroom protocols to an increased emphasis on remote employees and digital-connectivity tools. Product costs have risen sharply, while labor shortages have been exacerbated and supply chain disruptions continue to result in project delays. Home prices have also spiked amidst shrinking inventories and a pronounced flight from the cities.

And now there's yet another COVID-related issue that's increasingly impacting the residential construction trade: the profound impact that the public-health crisis is having on workplace mental health.

Indeed, throughout the months-long pandemic, employees and business owners alike have faced an unprecedented confluence of issues threatening their physical and mental wellbeing. Routines have been disrupted, relationships strained, fears heightened over personal health and the health of loved ones. Feelings of isolation have led, in many cases, to a pervasive sense of loneliness and vulnerability. Anxiety, uncertainty, depression and stress have similarly taken a toll. While many remote employees are handling the disruptions well, others miss the sense of connectedness they had once in offices, factories and showrooms.

The subject of workplace mental health has been thrust into the public spotlight in recent months, particularly now that the nation is experiencing a resurgence of the coronavirus amidst contentious differences regarding issues like masking and vaccinations. And now, with no end to the pandemic seemingly in sight, many people are experiencing a sense of "horizonlessness," the lack of a firm reference point regarding the future, as well as a sense of déjà vu regarding potential job losses and business closures.

All of this has had a cumulative effect. Indeed, workplace mental health is being described by experts as an "invisible crisis" that has yielded a palpable rise in chronic pain, fatigue, substance abuse, loss of productivity and suicide.

It has also yielded, thankfully, some decisive action.

The National Association of Home Builders, for example, is actively attempting to change the culture regarding mental health awareness by providing resources tailored to employees and business owners in the residential construction trade. As evidence, the NAHB recently launched a multi-faceted initiative focused on helping business owners support healthy work environments and turn mental health awareness into action. As part of that effort, the NAHB partnered with other trade groups and mental-health experts to develop specific tools for business owners to learn more about employee wellbeing, help eradicate the stigma associated with mental illness, and encourage employees to utilize the resources available to help navigate this complex, sensitive issue.

This effort is more than simply commendable. Indeed, it should serve as a model for others.

Business leaders and industry trade associations have an important role to play when it comes to balancing worker health with the ROI that can be realized by focusing on wellness through the lens of lower healthcare costs, reduced absenteeism and increased productivity.

Corporate management should fully understand why mental health is essential to the success of their companies. They should also understand how they can be proactive in incorporating mental health into a company culture that prioritizes the wellness of employees as much as it does revenue and profits. ■

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Designers on Getting to Know Clients

How do you get to know new clients and ensure that your firm's services are right for them, and vice versa?

"WE ARE TRYING to change from immediately going to someone's house to having them come to our design studio and show photos, discuss the project and for us to offer some budget parameters. We quoted over one million dollars' worth of projects over the past 12–18 months and did not get the work due to price. If they don't come in and we go there, we try not to leave without a budget and a budget discussion. People want to hire us, but the cost is often too high for them. We are working on our website to develop some info in regard to pricing for certain types of projects."

Maryjo Meacham, owner
Urban Kitchens
Oklahoma City, OK

"THE PROCESS TO get to know new clients is actually simple but effective. Appointments are set after discussing the scope of work clients want done and approximate budget investment. The first meeting is always at their home to get to know the clients and hear their ideas, take measurements and share our ideas. From there, I email color renderings based on the meeting within two days. The next meeting is at our showroom to make selections and review cost breakdown. My advantage is over 44 years of kitchen and bath design. I make the process fun and easy. I listen very well."

Brian Borsch, kitchen and bath designer
More For Less Remodeling
Affton, MO

"I ALWAYS CONTACT a potential new client by phone; this is the best way to initially present my design services and value. A phone call also provides the opportunity to learn about the client's communication style, to query for a deeper understanding of the project's scope and to determine the basis for a potential fit. If the initial phone call sounds promising for both client and designer, a complimentary onsite meeting is scheduled. This meeting provides a one- or two-hour conversation to see if my services/fees meet the client's needs as well as if the project is a good fit for my design niche."

Gail Monica Dent, designer/owner
Provanti Designs
Redmond, WA

"THE FIRST APPOINTMENT is always at our showroom. This no-charge meeting is an opportunity to discuss the scope of their project and how we can help them develop and achieve their vision. It is also a mutual interview – they are interviewing us, and we are interviewing them for fit of the project scope and budget, as well as compatibility of personalities. It also gives them an opportunity to see examples of cabinetry, countertops, appliances and other products in complete working displays and discuss options in quality and cost. Generally, we do not discuss actual design solutions for their project, but often show photos of completed projects with similar challenges. At the end of this first meeting, the client understands the process, we know their expectations, and we both know if we are the right firm for them."

Peggy McGowen, co-owner
Kitchen & Bath Concepts
Houston, TX

"EVERY PROJECT BEGINS with a phone call to gain insight into the client's needs and expectations. It is important for me to explain to clients what my process is, what drawings I provide and where my fees start for various project types. If our expectations appear to align, I schedule an onsite meeting to walk the property with the client. Because I offer insight and advice during this meeting, which could include design suggestions, assessment of the homes structure to determine feasibility of structural modifications or assessment of the site for additions and new builds, I charge a flat fee for this meeting. I follow up with a detailed design services proposal that is tailored to their project. This two-step interview process helps to assure each party that we are a good fit."

Kimberly Kerl, owner/principal designer
Kustom Home Design
Greer, SC

"VIDEO PHONE CALLS and/or Zoom meetings are arranged for "discovery." We used to do in-person meetings until 2020. We may well stay with the electronic format since it has proven efficient and effective. The virtual meeting is exploratory, and a series of questions lead us to either mutual ground or information and guidance for the consumer. If we are not the right fit, we attempt to send out 'disciples' who will send us other consumers who are. The video format allows us to see almost everything we would have seen in person, much less time consuming, and less exposure for all."

Max Isley, CFO/CEO
Hampton Kitchens of Raleigh, Inc.
Raleigh, NC

"WE MEET WITH them in person. We spend time listening to their primary concerns and ask about previous experiences they may have had with other professionals or service persons. If we are not a good fit, we recommend others for the job."

Tiffany Farrell, president
Affinity Kitchen & Bath
Sarasota, FL

"WE FIRST HAVE a phone conversation where we pre-qualify them. Then we have one complimentary consultation, generally in our showroom. We ask them to bring pictures or videos of their space and cabinets, or architect's plans if available. By the end of the meeting we have a general idea of what we will recommend for their new kitchen/bathroom, as well as preliminary cabinet selections. We then calculate a cabinet estimate that we email to them. If they would like to move forward, they pay a design fee that is later subtracted from the cabinet order."

Nancy Jacobson, president
Kitchen Design Partners
Northbrook, IL

"WE ADVERTISE ON Yelp, Houzz and Angi to generate leads and create brand awareness. However, our highest conversion rates and actual clients come through referrals. We chat with prospective clients on the phone to see if their project is a fit for us. Then we set up an initial consultation that lasts two to three hours. We arrive with a mobile showroom, and the consultation includes design layout advice and material selection. After spending that time collaborating on their project, we usually know if there is going to be a personality clash or if we can work well together."

Elana Riedel, president
The Cabinet Lady
Riverside, CA

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Market Headwinds Seen Stunting Growth

SUPPLY-SIDE CHALLENGES, along with rising prices, labor shortages and limited inventory, continue to restrain growth in new construction, home sales and residential remodeling, even as all three sectors continue to expand, market analysts report. Among the key statistics and forecasts released in recent weeks by government agencies, research firms and industry-related trade associations were the following:

HOUSING STARTS & NEW-HOME SALES

Soaring building material costs, high demand and low inventory have added tens of thousands of dollars to the price of a new home, causing housing affordability to fall to its lowest level in nearly a decade, the National Association of Home Builders said last month. In the meantime, higher construction costs coupled with supply chain challenges, labor shortages and rising home prices have pushed builder confidence to its lowest level since July 2020, the Washington, DC-based NAHB reported. "While the demographics and interest for home buying remain solid, higher costs and material access issues have resulted in lower levels of home building, and even put a hold on some new-home sales," said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. "While supply-side limitations are holding back the market, our expectation is that production bottlenecks should ease over the coming months and the market should return to more normal conditions," Dietz said.

EXISTING-HOME SALES

Rising mortgage rates "will soften demand and cool price appreciation" on homes for sale by the end of this year, the chief economist for the National Association of Realtors said last month. According to the latest forecast by Lawrence Yun of the Washington, DC-based NAR, with buyer demand easing and housing starts improving to 1.65 million units in 2022 (compared to an estimated 1.565 million units this year), existing-home sales prices should increase at a far slower pace next year – 4.4% compared this year's 14.1%. "Home price gains and the accompanying housing wealth accumulation have been spectacular over the past year, but are unlikely to be repeated in 2022," Yun said. "The housing market looks to move from 'super-hot' to 'warm,' with markedly slower price gains."

RESIDENTIAL REMODELING

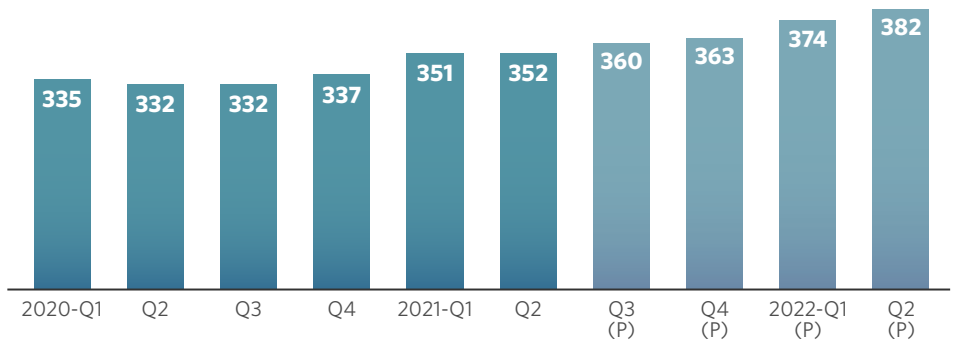
More than three quarters of businesses in the construction and architectural/design services sectors reported that product and material shortages and costs impacted their businesses in the second quarter of this year, while more than half of both sectors report that labor shortages and costs impacted their businesses, according to Houzz, Inc., the online platform for home remodeling and design. According to Houzz, more than nine in 10 businesses across both sectors reported second-quarter increases in costs for lumber, copper, steel and aluminum. Additional materials that construction pros anticipate increasing in cost include plastic, concrete, paint, foam and drywall, Houzz said, adding that more than nine in 10 construction businesses report moderate-to-severe skilled labor shortages, with carpenters, laborers, framers, cabinet specialists and plumbers in particularly short supply.

CABINET & VANITY SALES

Major domestic kitchen cabinet and vanity manufacturers continued to post substantial sales gains through the first seven months of 2021, according to the latest in a series of monthly surveys by the Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association. The KCMA's latest "Trend of Business Survey" reflected a year-to-date sales increase of 18.3% through July, compared to the same seven-month period in 2020. Custom cabinet sales through the first seven months were reported up 21.5% over the same period last year, while semi-custom sales rose 17.6% and sales of stock cabinets gained 18.1%, the Reston, VA-based KCMA said. July sales were up 7.2% compared to the same month last year, the association added.

PROJECTED GROWTH IN THE U.S. RESIDENTIAL REMODELING MARKET

Annual Homeowner Improvements & Repairs, in Billions of Dollars



Gains in residential remodeling spending are expected to accelerate in the second half of this year and remain elevated through mid-2022, with projections of annual growth reaching 8.6% by next year's second quarter. Given the strength of home sales, home-price appreciation and new construction, annual remodeling expenditures are expected to surpass $380 billion by mid-2022.

Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University

MARKET ANALYSIS

High-End Projects Seen Leading Kitchen, Bath Market Surge

HACKETTSTOWN, NJ — Although forecasts for low- and mid-range project spending have each been revised upward, it is the high end of the kitchen and bath market that will "shine" in the months ahead, according to the latest market forecast issued by the National Kitchen & Bath Association.

According to the NKBA forecast, the high end of the kitchen/bath market is now expected to surge by more 28% compared to 2020, topping the association's initial 19.8% projection, as pent-up demand, robust savings and sharply rising home appreciation "encourage homeowners to go the extra mile" when it comes to spending.

In its latest forecast, the Hackettstown, NJ-based NKBA revised its 2021 industry sales projection to $170.9 billion in kitchen and bath spending, up by 21.4% from 2020's $140.8 billion, and nearly 8% higher than the association's initial estimate for the year.

New construction kitchen and bath spending is expected to exceed 2020 by 28.5%, while kitchen/bath remodeling expenditures are expected to rise by 12.5%, according to the NKBA. Total kitchen spending (new construction and remodel) is targeted at $81 billion, with bath spending estimated at $89 billion, both more than 20% above last year.

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Market Builds on Q2, Concerns Linger

HACKETTSTOWN, NJ — Continued growth is being forecast for the kitchen and bath market, although ongoing material shortages, rising labor costs and the continued threat of COVID-19 were the leading concerns among industry principals surveyed in the second quarter of 2021.

That's the key conclusion of the latest Kitchen & Bath Market Index (KBMI), a quarterly gauge of current and future conditions within the kitchen & bath industry. The index, compiled by the National Kitchen & Bath Association and John Burns Real Estate Consulting, was based on a survey of 510 NKBA members across four industry segments: design, building & construction, manufacturing and retail sales. Results were released in late August.

An 82.3 overall KBMI score for the second quarter of 2021 topped the previous record of 79.8 from this year's first quarter, while reflecting sharp growth over last year, according to the NKBA and John Burns Real Estate Consulting, an independent research provider and consulting firm focused on the housing industry **(see graph below)**. Estimates indicated an 11% growth in sales for Q2 vs. Q1. Future conditions, however, "are flashing warning signals," as price hikes and lead times are beginning to take a toll, the KBMI suggests.

"We're encouraged by the findings from our report, which reaffirms the outlook as one of growth and strong earnings," said Bill Darcy, CEO of the Hackettstown, NJ-based NKBA. "While we're seeing the continued delay of materials and increase in labor costs causing problems and concerns, it also shows that the skyrocketing demand for remodeling projects has continued."

Darcy added, however, that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have significant impact on the supply chain and material development industries, resulting in "widespread challenges" that have led to double-digit price increases for many kitchen and bath products, while labor rates have increased an additional 10-19%.

"All of these factors have put a strain on the consumer budget," Darcy said, adding that many NKBA members are "becoming creative, ordering months in advance to circumvent lead times and lessen the sting of price hikes."

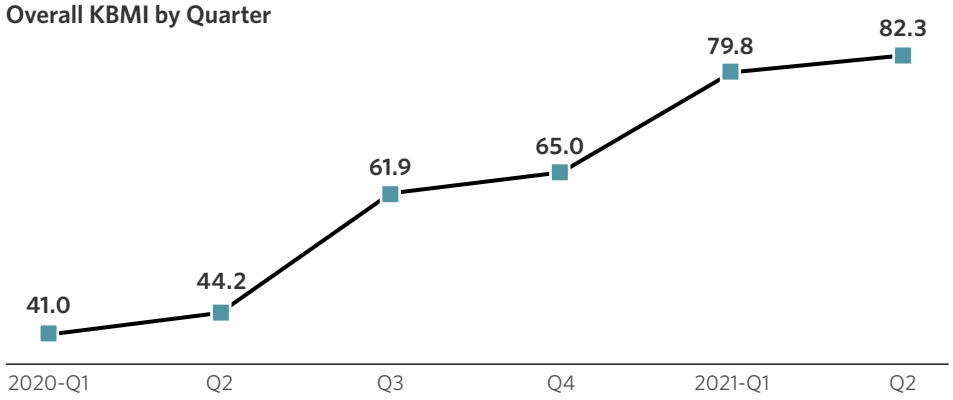
Nevertheless, the outlook toward the industry's future "is positive as consumers are content to wait out and postpone projects rather than canceling altogether, signaling continued growth for the sector as the year progresses," Darcy noted.

Among the KBMI's other key findings:

- Demand remains high: There is a clear demand for remodeling services as 60% of designers have reported a backlog of at least three months. Additionally, in Q2 2021, 55% of the building and construction industry reported zero projects canceled, a stark contrast from the previous quarter. Furthermore, despite an increase in material costs, nearly half of retailers (46%) have begun to see a shift in typical price points demanded by customers, with 89% saying their customers are shifting toward the pricier, higher-end finishes.
- Labor challenges persist: As the qualified labor pool continues to shrink with early retirement and career changes, building and construction companies scramble to incentivize their current workforce. 80% of companies report increasing labor rates to retain employees, with nearly two-thirds report rising rates of as much as 19%. This continues to increase the overall price of the project and delay the time frames of planned remodels. However, clients continue to move forward with projects and are willing to pay for products and finishes in demand.
- COVID-19's impact lessens: While industry experts and professionals keep a watchful eye on the progression of the Delta variant of the coronavirus, members reported a significant drop in the pandemic's impact on business, giving it a score of 4.9 out of 10, where 0 is no impact at all and 10 is a significant impact – down significantly from around 6 the previous three quarters. ■

THE STEADY, YEAR-LONG GROWTH IN THE KITCHEN & BATH MARKET

Overall KBMI by Quarter



Economic and demographic factors are expected to support continued growth in existing-home sales , which are projected to rise above a year ago, as reflected in the graphic above.

Source: National Association of Realtors

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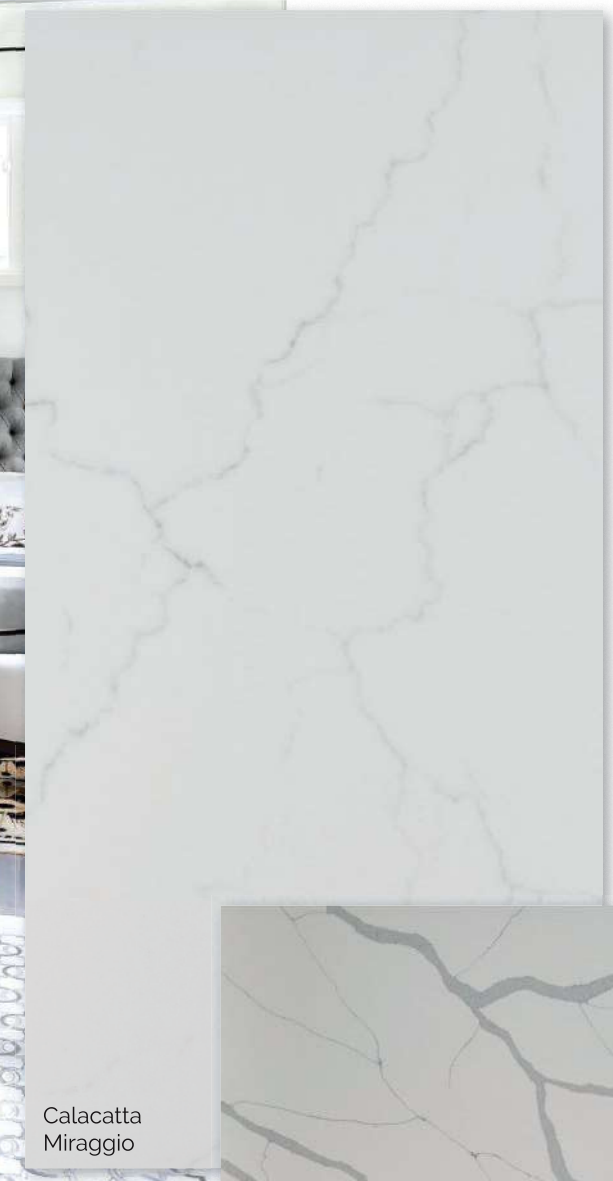

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Warm, soothing colors and the influence of nature are among the trends influencing home design, according to a new study.

Photo: © Adobe Stock / andi26

Key Trends Seen 'Transforming' Homes

IRVINE, CA — A trio of "overarching trends" that have emerged in the past year as a byproduct of COVID-19 has "transformed" the way U.S. consumers are viewing, using and renovating their homes, a major new nationwide survey has found.

The research, conducted by The House of Rohl, the Irvine, CA-based portfolio of luxury plumbing brands, "comes at a time when many Americans are returning to normal routines, re-opening their homes up to family and friends," according to researchers, whose survey was conducted in May among more than 1,000 respondents.

While this past year saw people spending more time at home than ever, and utilizing their spaces in multiple ways, The House of Rohl survey unveiled a continued interest in home renovations, in particular kitchens and baths. For example, more than one in three (36%) respondents plan to update their kitchen or bathroom(s) this year or early next year, the survey found, while 44% with a combined household income of at least $150K plan to update one of these rooms. Half of survey respondents said they want to renovate their homes with guest entertaining in mind, which can take the form of revamped outdoor spaces, additional seating areas and upgraded furniture, researchers added.

"Americans are excited to welcome people back into their homes, which is driving the continued interest in renovations," according to Eveline Simard, principal industrial designer for The House of Rohl, a unit of Fortune Brands' Global Plumbing Group.

At the same time, Simard said, the return to normal routines is also driving the need for a sanctuary, with 70% of respondents wanting their homes to feel like a calming retreat from the busy world. Half of the consumers surveyed said they want their bathrooms to feel like a personal spa.

"We know that many people took time to update their personal spaces while at home this past year, and this new data allows us to further shed light onto the importance of the home sanctuary," said Simard. "While we look forward to gatherings, we still want to return to that escape. This is true even in the bathroom."

Not only do Americans want to renovate their homes for guests, but 57% of survey respondents also agreed that spending more time at home has shown them the value of an "elevated home experience," according to The House of Rohl. Because of that, half said they have identified areas for home improvement, and 47% are willing to spend more money on home renovation than they would have in the past to achieve a lavish home environment, the company noted.

"As consumers spent time indoors, they experienced firsthand the importance of the home and are now willing to transform their space to reflect a need for a more stylized residence," said Simard.

"The motivation to renovate in this manner, and with a higher budget, likely means we will be seeing consumers choose higher quality materials, enlist the help of a (professional) designer or opt for luxury brands."

The tumultuous times of the past year have also had a lasting impact on style preferences, with a few key microtrends here to stay as people continue to update their homes, Rohl researchers said. Among the most prominent microtrends:

- **Personalized Style:** A majority (58%) of survey respondents agree that, more recently, they want their kitchen and bathrooms to showcase their personal style, and 63% are more likely to select bathroom fixtures if they can personalize them.

- **Soothing Colors:** Nearly two thirds (61%) of survey respondents agree that they want to bring more warm and relaxing colors into their spaces to help inspire relaxation.

- **Biophilic Approach to Design:** To further strengthen the connection to nature in their homes, nearly half (45%) of survey respondents stated that they have prioritized bringing outdoor elements into their home spaces.

- **Chic Sanitization:** Fifty-three percent of those surveyed would consider purchasing motion-activated or hands-free faucet options to help reduce the spread of germs, a reflection of consumers' need for health and wellness properties. This increases to more than three-quarters (76%) for respondents with a combined household income of at least $150,000.

"The lasting effects the past year had on interiors will stay with us for the foreseeable future," said Simard. "Notably, consumers are interested in touchless faucets within their homes as we continue to combat germs. Additionally, the turn to soothing colors throughout the home speaks to the need for relaxation, and spa-like bathrooms are becoming increasingly popular." ■

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KBIS 2022, Subject to Virus Protocols, Opens Registration for Attendees

HACKETTSTOWN, NJ — The National Kitchen & Bath Association has opened attendee registration for the 2022 Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS), scheduled to return as an in-person event next February in Orlando, FL with strict virus-mitigation protocols in place, show officials announced.

The annual trade show and educational conference, owned by the NKBA and produced by Emerald Expositions, is the largest North American trade expo for kitchen and bath industry professionals. The 2021 KBIS, scheduled for Orlando, FL last February, was cancelled as an in-person and converted largely into a digital event due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scheduled for Orlando's Orange County Convention Center from Feb. 8-10, 2022, KBIS 2022 is staged in conjunction with the National Association of Home Builders' International Builders Show (IBS) as part of "Design & Construction Week." The two shows are expected to feature more than 800,000 net sq. ft. of exhibit space and showcase more than 1,000 design and construction product brands.

"We are very much looking forward to getting the industry back together at the start of the new year," said Suzie Williford, executive v.p. and chief strategy officer for the Hackettstown, NJ-based NKBA. "KBIS is not only a place for old friends and colleagues to catch up, but also a chance for new faces to become part of this talented and inclusive community."

"We've had such a great turnout in Orlando in past years and are excited to host this much-anticipated event in person again," said Emerald Group V.P. Jason McGraw. "KBIS 2022 is slated to be one of the most impactful events of the industry, filled with the latest innovative products and programming."

The NKBA and Emerald Expositions "are committed to creating an event experience where customers, partners and employees can safely and effectively conduct business in person," KBIS officials said, adding that they we will be following the CDC COVID-19 health and safety measures and protocols. A list of precautionary measures being implemented for can be found in the KBIS Health & Safety Plan on the NKBA's website, www.nkba.org.

"The health and safety of all who engage with us during KBIS 2022 is our number-one priority and, as such, we are continually monitoring the status of the COVID-19 Delta variant and CDC guidelines," McGraw said. "We will communicate any updates should policies change."

Additional details about the show, including programs and registration information, are available by accessing the KBIS 2022 link at www.nkba.org.

The Cabinet Q team from Austin, TX celebrates the Cabinets Plus USA name change and nationwide expansion effort of the company.

Cabinets Plus Changes Name, Expands Franchise Effort Nationwide

AUSTIN, TX — Cabinets Plus USA, the kitchen-related franchising operation headquartered in Austin, TX, has changed its corporate name to Cabinet Q as part of a nationwide expansion effort.

The expansion initiative, which launched last month, will enable the newly named Cabinet Q to rolling out its franchise program, replicating its business model nationwide, the company said.

"The Cabinets Plus USA brand has been a robust and fast-growing fixture in the Austin, TX area (and) has become well known for its step-by-step system to provide quality, service and design in kitchen and bath remodeling," said company owner Michael Hartel. "Strong demand for services has spurred our growth, and this name change better reflects our position as the most innovative cabinet and kitchen remodeling company, and now franchise opportunity."

The rebranding does not affect any existing orders or projects, the company said, adding that corporate ownership, billing address, shipping addresses and invoicing information remain the same.

ANSI Standard for Tile Slip Resistance Unveiled by Tile Council of North America

CLEMSON, SC — A consortium of North America's leading ceramic tile suppliers has developed a "product use classification system" aimed at allowing manufacturers to communicate appropriate areas of use based on the slip resistance characteristics of their products.

The Tile Council of North America (TCNA) announced the development of guidelines to be included in ANSI A326.3 (National Standard Test Method for Measuring Dynamic Coefficient of Friction of Hard Surface Flooring Materials) as a standard for manufacturers to classify hard surface flooring into one or more of five product-use categories in both interior and exterior applications.

The guidelines were unveiled in July by the TCNA, a Clemson, SC-based trade association representing manufacturers of ceramic tile, tile installation materials, tile equipment, raw materials and related products.

"Use of the classification system will provide architects, specifiers and interior designers the information they want in order to choose hard surface flooring products appropriate for their intended areas of use," said TCNA Executive Director Eric Astrachan. "As a result, improved flooring specifications are anticipated, potentially leading to fewer slip incidents."

To assist manufacturers, the TCNA said it is expanding its Product Performance Testing Laboratory's slip resistance testing capabilities.

Allied Stone Unveils New Gallery Concept

DALLAS — Allied Stone Inc., a Dallas-based importer, fabricator and installer of natural and engineered stone surfaces, has introduced a new luxury stone and cabinetry concept, Allied Gallery, that will enable the company to combine stone surfaces and accessories with custom cabinetry and transform Allied's showrooms into "a total interiors solution destination" aimed at homeowners, design professionals and custom home builders, the company announced.

All Allied Stone showrooms in Austin, Dallas, Durant, Houston and Lubbock, TX will transition to Allied Gallery locations, the company said, adding that the brand launch includes an updated website and messaging.

"We're excited to add this new luxury retail stone and cabinetry brand extension to Allied Stone's family of companies," said Gerard Goh of Allied Stone. "This new concept was developed to meet the growing interior design trends of the custom market (and) allows us to successfully continue our strategic plan and grow our customer base."

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Emerging Home Design Trends Revealed in Houzz Report

PALO ALTO, CA — The COVID-19 pandemic has changed people's perception of "home," resulting in new styles, features and aesthetics surfacing in home design over the past year – among them a need for dedicated activity spaces, a desire to bring the outdoors in and a requirement to create flexible interior spaces.

That is the key conclusion of research conducted by Houzz Inc., the Palo Alto, CA-based online resource for home remodeling, which recently identified the top emerging home design trends based on the latest search insights from its community of homeowners and remodeling pros.

According to Houzz, the following are among the leading COVID-fueled home design trends that have emerged in the past year:

- **Dedicated Activity Spaces:** "People have been relying on their homes to provide new avenues of activity and entertainment since the beginning of the pandemic," said Houzz, pointing to search trends that the online resource is seeing for art studios (up nearly tenfold), home bars and wine cellars (up nearly four times) and home theaters, home gyms and home offices (up between two and three times each).
- **Bringing the Outdoors In:** According to Houzz, one in five remodeling homeowners is opening up their kitchens to the outdoors, with "openness to nature and the role of greenery in our homes a trend that seems to be accelerating." Searches for artificial plants and trees, as well as indoor pots and planters, are up significantly, respectively, since last year. "We're also seeing a significant uptick in searches for green kitchen cabinets, bathroom tile, accent chairs and bedrooms," Houzz said.
- **Living Room Refresh:** As people have spent more time in their living room over the past year, "they may be seeking inspiration to refresh the space," with searches for living rooms up 52% compared to the same time in 2020, Houzz reported. Home accents in general have seen some of the most dramatic increases, along with decorative accents, abstract paintings, display shelves and slip or chair covers, the company noted.
- **Flexible Design:** Many homeowners are turning to design options that offer more flexibility within the existing footprint of their homes, Houzz reported. Searches for TV armoires with pocket doors, queen murphy beds and nesting side tables are among the products and features generating significantly higher interest, Houzz researchers added.

The Corsi Group Changes Ownership

INDIANAPOLIS, IN — The Corsi Group has announced the transfer of company ownership from Pat Corsi, who founded the company in 1973, to Mark Earl. Corsi will serve as an advisor to The Corsi Group during the transition. The transfer was effective on August 31, 2021.

Pat Corsi stated, "It has been my great pleasure and an honor to work with some of the finest employees, suppliers, reps, dealers and designers in the cabinet industry for the past 48 years. I know Mark will take the company to new heights, and I have every confidence that the management team will work well with his process-oriented approach."

Earl, incoming CEO, added, "I look forward to working with the Corsi management team, and helping grow this terrific group of premium brands. Pat has built a strong company, and I want to continue to build on his legacy."

Earl is a strategic leader with deep experience in product development, strategic marketing, finance, sales and marketing, and operations, noted The Corsi Group. He has led companies from $20 million to $150 million in annual revenue. Most recently, he served as senior v.p., Americas for Nokian Tyres, a global tire manufacturer. Terms of the sale will not be disclosed.

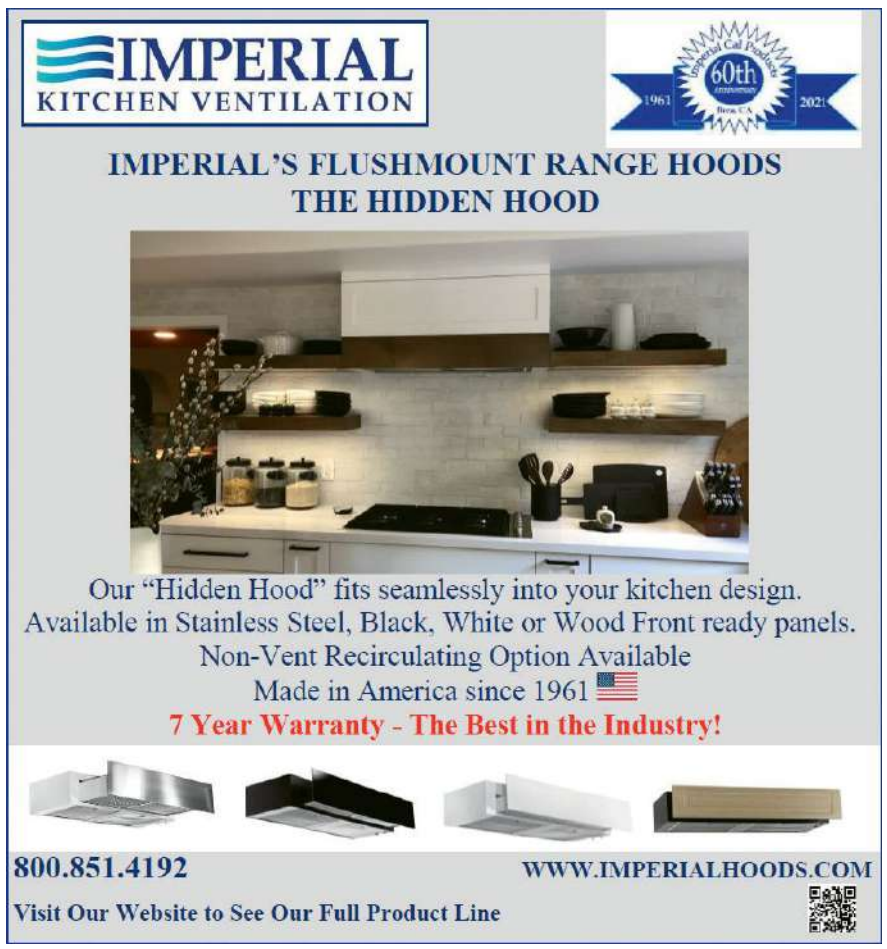
The Corsi Group has been building custom cabinetry for 48 years. The company's two brands, Greenfield Cabinetry and Siteline Cabinetry, are distributed nationally to about 500 dealer/designers. All cabinets are built in the company's two plants, located in Indianapolis, IN and Elkins, WV.

Bruce Flooring Parent Firm Announces Acquisition of American OEM

MOUNTVILLE, PA — AHF Products, the Dickson, TN-based manufacturer of hardwood flooring products, has announced its acquisition of certain assets of American OEM, the trade name of Cumberland Products Group, LLC.

American OEM, headquartered in Mountville, PA, manufactures hardwood flooring and markets its products under the Raintree, Hearthwood and Emily Morrow Home brands, as well as through private label. The company serves flooring distributors, as well as specialty and national retailers across North America.

AHF's other flooring brands include Bruce, Hartco, LM Flooring, Robbins, Capella, HomerWood, Tmbr and Parterre.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Legislative Effort Applauded By Plumbing Suppliers

WASHINGTON, DC — Plumbing Manufacturers International, the trade association representing the nation's leading plumbing products suppliers, had applauded Congressional officials for advancing legislation reauthorizing the National Institute of Standards and Technology and calling for the creation of a program for premise plumbing research.

The PMI, in conjunction with the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), commended members of the House of Representatives' Science, Space and Technology Committee for their efforts to provide the National Institute of Standards and Technology with the funding needed to conduct research on issues such as water quality, efficiency, reuse, sustainability and resilience. A new program at NIST will help to combat a sharp increase in Legionnaires' disease since 2000, the PMI said.

"From the exponential growth of Legionnaires' disease outbreaks to increasing housing affordability, the industry is waiting and ready to apply the findings of this research to tackle major issues," said IAPMO's CEO Dave Viola. "We applaud (the House committee) for recognizing this need and including it in this important piece of legislation. This will have a direct, positive impact on America's homes and buildings today and for the foreseeable future."

"American consumers have the benefit of state-of-the-art, water-efficient plumbing fittings and fixtures. However, the legacy plumbing that carries water to these fixtures in our homes and offices is based on data from the 1930s," said PMI CEO Kerry Stackpole. "Updated research and data by NIST in conjunction with academia, industry and other key stakeholders would significantly improve the water efficiency and safety in water systems across the nation."

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Tile of Spain Awards Call for Entries

MIAMI, FL — The Spanish Ceramic Tile Manufacturer's Association (ASCER) has issued the call for entries for the 20th annual Tile of Spain Awards of Architecture, Interior Design and Final Degree Project.

Sponsored by Endesa, the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade (ICEX) and Port Valencia, the Tile of Spain Awards promote the use of Spanish ceramic tiles in architecture and interior design projects worldwide.

For the 2021 installment of the Awards, the jury will be chaired by architect Carlos Ferrater, who also led the jury during the first edition of the Awards in 2001. Carlos Ferrater is a founding partner of the Office of Architecture in Barcelona (OAB) and is a professor of Architectural Projects at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, with a long history backed by numerous awards and distinctions.

The Tile of Spain Awards have a prize fund of €35,000 ($41,220.11) shared between three categories. The two main categories, Architecture and Interior Design, each have cash prizes of €15,000 ($17,665.76). The Final Degree Project award has a cash prize of €5,000 ($5,888,58). The panel of judges is also entitled to give two special mentions in each category.

Entries from Spain and abroad are being accepted now through October 28, 2021. Visit www.tileofspainawards.com to enter the contest or learn more about the Tile of Spain Awards.

Garden State Tile to Relocate Showroom

PHILADELPHIA, PA — Garden State Tile, the Philadelphia, PA-based tile and stone distributor, will be relocating its Philadelphia Showroom and Design Center to the Chestnut Hill neighborhood, the company announced.

The new luxury showroom, located at 7800 Germantown Ave. in what is known as the city's Garden District, spans 3,500 sq. ft. and offers 18 free parking spaces for clients.

"Garden State Tile is excited to join the abundance of design centers, boutique shops, art galleries and eateries in Chestnut Hill's historic shopping district," said showroom sales director Valerie Hutchinson.

The Chestnut Hill showroom is expected to be open to the public in late 2021.

AXOR Launches Showroom Display Program

ALPHARETTA, GA — AXOR, the luxury brand of plumbing fixtures from Hansgrohe, has launched an "enhanced brand experience" at select U.S. showrooms through a newly created AXOR Destination program, the company announced.

The plumbing fixture brand partnered with 12 of its top customers to feature an exclusive display highlighting the company's designer collections of faucets and showerheads. The program also includes training and marketing support, AXOR said.

"These showrooms were strategically selected due to their prime locations, dedication to the brand and desirable customer base," said Jason McNeely, senior brand manager for AXOR. "We are confident that these Destination partners will provide customers with the best possible experience with AXOR," he added.

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Kohler Progresses on Corporate Initiatives

KOHLER, WI — Kohler Co., the Kohler, WI-based manufacturer of plumbing products, tile, cabinetry and lighting, has outlined steps the company is taking to adhere to corporate commitments tied to social, governance and environmental issues.

Kohler's 2020 "Believing in Better" Metrics Report, released in August, addressed the progress being made to reduce the company's GHG emission intensity, waste-to-landfill intensity, water-use intensity and other key initiatives.

Among the highlights of Kohler's "Believing in Better" initiative were:

- A reduction in operational intensities since 2008 that has cut net greenhouse gas emissions by 48%, operational energy use by 22%, waste-to-landfill by 47%, and water use by 46%.
- Generated more than $1 billion in sales from environmentally favorable products in 2020.
- Completed more "Design for Environment" (DfE) projects, an incubator for developing products that are better for the planet, than in all previous years combined.
- Pivoted manufacturing facilities to produce and donate 80,000 face shields for frontline workers during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Provided 3,500 showers for the unhoused.
- 26 teams competed in the annual Innovation for Good I-Prize, an internal competition that encourages associates to develop solutions with a social purpose.
- More than 1,600 associates from around the world united around various communities and their allies, including launching a "hate has no home" education and fundraising campaign.

"While Kohler celebrates creativity, diversity and innovation, we know we can do more to protect the planet, build resilient communities and enrich the quality of life for everyone," said Laura Kohler, senior v.p./human resources, stewardship and sustainability.

Kitchen Magic Expands Services

NAZARETH, PA — Kitchen Magic, the Nazareth, PA-based kitchen remodeling/refacing company, has expanded its remodeling services to tackle additional rooms in the home, the company announced.

The company's expanded efforts include solutions for laundry rooms, pantries and storage solutions throughout the home, Kitchen Magic said. To complement this initiative, the company has launched a new line of affordable cabinetry named Barwen. Homeowners will also have access to custom cabinet upgrades, according to Kitchen Magic, which serves Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

"The initiative to apply 40+ years of innovation and experience to rooms beyond the kitchen was put into motion as the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns uncovered emerging client needs aimed at making homes more efficient in the work-from-home era," said Kitchen Magic President Brett Bacho. "We jumped at the opportunity to create solutions that streamline and declutter the home...as well as introduce Kitchen Magic to a wider group of homeowners seeking remodeling."

International Studio Concept Launched By Design Holding

COPENHAGEN — Design Holding, the parent company of product brands including B&B Italia, Maxalto, Azucena, Arclinea, Flos and Louis Poulsen, is launching the group's first design retail destination and multi-brand experience.

The destination, to be known as D Studio, is being opened first in Copenhagen, and later this fall in Milan and New York, according to the company.

"D Studio was born from Design Holding's vision to create an unrivaled design destination (in which) these brands of contemporary furniture and lighting come together in an innovative setting, a place where design can be encountered, celebrated and acquired all under one roof," the Copenhagen-based company said.

Multiple brands will be presented to audiences, including private customers and professional clients, Design Holding officials said. An interactive experience will merge physical with digital, "allowing for inspiration, perusal, design, discovery and beyond," officials added.

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Earning Trust in a Skeptical World

THE FIGURES ARE shocking. Less than 25% of Americans trust the federal government to do the right thing, according to a recent Pew survey. And it's not just Uncle Sam. Approximately a quarter of the U.S. population does not have a religious affiliation. One-third of Americans don't trust the media to tell the truth, reaching a historic high, according to Gallup.

Can you blame people for being skeptical, weary and trust adverse? There have been monumental failures of leadership, deceptive practices, the use of "alternative facts" and outright deceit from brands, the government, public figures and media outlets that at one time offered a definitive perspective on the day's news. Unfortunately, Walter Cronkite is not around any longer.

"Showrooms can earn trust by teaching their customers to trust themselves by providing information and resources."

BECOMING A TRUSTED RESOURCE

How does a kitchen and bath showroom, in the midst of ongoing pandemic concerns, booming business volume and never-before-seen supply chain challenges, earn and maintain the trust of a skeptical customer base and market?

In her new book *Trustworthy: How the Smartest Brands Beat Cynicism and Bridge the Trust Gap*, Margot Bloomstein provides a process for becoming a trusted resource for a showroom's client base. That road map has three parts: voice, volume and vulnerability.

Voice refers to the consistent and familiar way in which a brand engages with its market both verbally and visually. A brand's voice elevates a showroom or design-build organization's most important qualities and characteristics.

Volume refers to the amount of information that a brand produces and determining how much content is enough. If you review kitchen and bath showroom websites, most will feature a portrait or project gallery with lots of kitchen images. Where this use of imagery falls short is that there typically are only images without explanation of anything. It's volume for volume's sake, and too often it's mind-numbing. Do you really believe that posting pictures of 50 different kitchens shouts to your customer base, "trust us"?

Showroom customers want and need affirmation. They want to feel confident in their knowledge and ability to make the right decisions for their project. They need for showrooms to make them smarter. Showrooms can earn trust by teaching their customers to trust themselves by providing information and resources that make decision making and working with a showroom easier.

At TraVek (Scottsdale, AZ), teaching customers to trust themselves begins and ends with strong communication and education. The showroom establishes trust with its market by offering monthly remodeling seminars in the showroom, sharing dinner with a crowd on average of 20 to 25 homeowners and explaining what's involved in the renovation process, information that they need to know, expectations, timelines, how to interview and evaluate contractors and price points to consider.

TraVek's Susan Raisanen explains that trust building begins with an initial meeting with a client at their home with all decision makers required to attend. Timelines are explained and agreed to, which is especially important in today's environment when many showrooms may not be able to supply product or start projects for four to six months from the time a contract is signed. TraVek continues to communicate with every client that is waiting weekly with a phone call, email or text depending on how the customer prefers to receive messages. "Even if the message is nothing has changed, reaching out and having a weekly touch point says to the customer 'you have not been forgotten, we still care about you,' and that helps to reinforce the trust factor with our showroom," Raisanen said.

At Murphy Bros. Design, Build, Remodel (Blaine, MN), the new supply chain paradigm has changed the sales approach. John Murphy explains, "We are completely transparent with customers, especially at initial meetings. Realistic timelines are presented, goals are established and market conditions are shared. We've even modified our proposals to highlight in the project scope the potential for delays at the start, in the middle and even before a project can be completed. We found that if we set expectations at the front end of projects, clients understand and they realize that other industries are experiencing similar challenges."

Murphy Bros. also encourages its clients to select a plan B for each product type in case there are unexpected production delays and steers clients away from products that it knows can't meet deadlines. The company also created a small woodshop in the back of its facility and retained a full-time woodworker to build custom cabinets if product is needed immediately that cannot be obtained through traditional channels.

Vulnerability refers to the uncertainty that comes from exposing your business to risk and criticism in the hope of improving, finding support or connecting with those who share similar values. Bloomstein claims that vulnerability is a corporate strength. It trades the safety of sure bets and certainty, such as three-week lead times, for choices that open the organization to risk, such as we can't tell you definitively when your cabinets will arrive, that results in potentially greater rewards because you are being honest and setting realistic expectations.

Vulnerability is how a business makes its values visible, how it owns mistakes, how it deals with the unexpected and how values are expressed and why.

Richard Campbell (Bath, Kitchen & Tile Center with three showrooms in Delaware and one in Maryland) did not receive a positive reception from his builder clientele when he informed them of product delays and unidentifiable delivery dates. "Almost all of our major builder clients told us they were walking away, only to find that other destinations had the same problems that we were experiencing. We understand what our builders' priorities are and started crafting solutions to meet them, such as ordering cabinets before a house is framed and working with the builder to adjust the framing to accommodate cabinet dimensions."

Bath, Kitchen and Tile has crafted stronger partnerships with its builder clientele by working together to develop supply chain solutions. "You build trust by recognizing and explaining to clients that we are in this together. Let's develop solutions and provide options that work, when others in the industry are resigning themselves to the belief that there is nothing they can do," Campbell stated.

Tom Caruso (Caruso Cabinets, Avon, OH) shifted his business model to take advantage of the surge in new home construction. He, too, is ordering cabinets before a home is framed and ordering truckloads of product weekly. This has provided Caruso the flexibility to pivot when necessary and supply product based on the progress of a project, client needs and highest priorities.

Bellmont Hardware showrooms in the San Francisco Bay area have personalized communication with customers by moving to appointment only. "This enables our sales team to provide undivided attention that results in more credibility and trust with customers," related company general manager who also happens to be named Rich Campbell.

Bath Kitchen & Tile, TraVek, Caruso Cabinets, Murphy Bros., Bellmont and others all are advising their customers not to start demolition until all product has been delivered. Most customers have resigned themselves to the longer timelines and to be patient. Bath Kitchen & Tile has been promoting a financing option to its clients that has been well received because payment does not begin until products are delivered. The company also is developing an automated communication system that updates clients on the status of their project every two to three weeks with varying messages that keep enthusiasm high, telling customers how important they are and encouraging outreach to the showroom if there are questions. The message is that Bath Kitchen & Tile wants to hear from its clients and talk to them during the wait period.

You can't have too many touchpoints in this environment, claims Brendon Murphy (Charleston Cabinetry & Countertops, LLC). At initial client meetings, he explains the 10 stages of a project from the initial design consultation to customer sign off at the end. "Reviewing each stage of the product sends the message that we want our customers to understand what is involved and demonstrates that our approach is well organized and thoughtful, which helps to build trust," Murphy said.

Many showrooms have found that there is a silver lining to the supply chain's dark cloud. Tom Caruso explained, "Because of lead times, our attention to detail has never been stronger. We check and double check every order to eliminate mistakes because if there is a problem, it may take four months or longer to resolve."

Brendon Murphy sends the message to his clients that he needs their help to get them what they want. At initial meetings, he asks clients how much they want to invest in their property and explains that, at the end of the day, his goal is to add more value to their home than the amount of their investment.

Kitchen and bath showrooms can build trust with consumers by effectively managing customer expectations, by using their voice in the right volume, making it easy to do business with them at every stage in the customer journey and to allow themselves to be vulnerable by explaining how they are addressing challenges and responding to problems with transparency and honesty. And the entire industry can benefit from the sage advice of Mark Twain, who said, "If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything." ■

Tom Cohn serves as the exec. v.p. of the Bath & Kitchen Business Group and president of Cohn Communications, Inc., a full-service strategic marketing and public relations agency headquartered in Bethesda, MD.

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I have pinpointed three categorical reasons this disconnect occurs. If you are spending money on digital marketing and your phone isn't ringing, read on for a guide to garner more customers. As an advocate for businesses, my hope is to empower owners with educational insight from independent sources so they can make informed decisions with confidence.

REASON #1: AGENCIES SELLING THE WORK WANTED

To understand the business/agency disconnect, we must explore the typical marketing agency business model. Most are structured around a staff that includes website builders, social media marketers, graphic designers and copywriters who often work on search engine optimization as well. The website builders are project oriented and need an ongoing supply of work to justify their pay. Conversely, the social media work is typically ongoing.

The most common occurrence I see is building an entirely new website for a client when a less expensive update would suffice. If a website builder is needing new work, unscrupulous agencies will begin pitching websites to all their prospects, and statistically they will get work. I personally discovered one agency that designed a website template programmed to increase additional billings and work. They created internal coding on the website that overrides automatic search engine optimization (SEO) from working so they could bill for SEO work separately after the website build. I had the uncomfortable task of informing the client of my discovery and the cost of re-coding the website.

Green Light: An agency that produces documented reporting that shows your website needs SEO work and provides a market share report that demonstrates a deficiency in your website visitors compared to your competitors visitors is an indicator they have the expertise and have done research to support the suggestion. Reporting that clearly shows the deficiencies that need correction is a good sign.

Red Light: When the agency relies only on the visual appearance of the website, or wants to produce a website that is photography based with no supporting analysis of your site. Websites that serve as a photo album with little or no written content will not increase new visitors from Google searches.

Hint: You can check your website's SEO score for free on many websites. This one scores on a scale of 100: https://www.seobility.net/en/seocheck/. This is the perfect tool to utilize to double check agency website work for integrity. This tool (or a similar third party) should also serve as a deliverable to achieve prior to final payment for website work.

Hint: If you are rebuilding your website, insist on an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant website. This ensures disabled visitors can access all the information. Websites are legally required to be ADA compliant; additionally, ADA-compliant websites are more SEO friendly, as the requirements of ADA and SEO overlap. Following is a link to a free ADA website checker: https://wave.webaim.org/

"Digital marketing is complex and is a powerful tool to grow your business."

REASON #2: OWNERS BELIEVE DIGITAL MARKETING IS A FINITE PROCESS

Digital marketing is an ongoing process of pivoting with the additions of experiences on social media. Instagram Live video feeds and Facebook Business Suite are a few of the latest 2021 additions. Additionally, building traffic to a website is an ongoing process of deliberate growth dictated by Google, Bing and others. All of these show your content based on algorithmic updates that change how they choose, and who to show, your content. To add to the complexity, your competitors are actively adding content to drive visitors in tandem.

I demonstrate this to clients by showing them their market share of the products they offer, as it is an effective benchmark. For example, the search terms "cabinet hardware" and "kitchen cabinet hardware" total 124,000 per month. If your website generates 4,000 monthly visitors, you have 3% of the total market. By showing this data in numerical form, it speaks a language most owners can understand and they can then develop a budget. After a website is built, there is work to be done on the SEO side, digital advertising, or both, to drive people to it.

Red Light: Business owners who think a website just needs to exist to increase visitors, or they sporadically post on social media with no brand campaign.

Green Light: Professionals who have market share reports to determine the growth potential and the credentials to grow, and will supply references for website SEO initiatives. Social media posting plans that encapsulate more than one post type, ie: Stories, videos AND Feed posts.

Hint: Consistent Blog Posting is the perfect vehicle to connect with your customers and provide new content that search engines want.

REASON #3: THE MARKETING IS LACKING

Targeting the correct audience is easier than ever with the amount of demographic and geographic data that every digital platform collects. When advertising on Google, Bing or social media, the success is in the details. If you are spending on digital advertising, you need to be guided by the reporting that shows the success rate by your audience demographics and geographical location. If your phone is not ringing, dig deeper into who exactly is being targeted to view the ads and adjust it accordingly.

Hint: Request reporting that shows the detail of the audience, the platforms the ads were shown on and the geographic locations.

A consistent brand identity provides consumers with the confidence of knowing the caliber of your products and the service associated with it. Does your social media brand mirror your website and printed collaterals? Does the customer experience stand up to the message? Are your employees educated on your brand identity? Having a solid, well-defined brand identity that clearly demonstrates your unique value is crucial. It ensures the customers are receiving the brand experience they expect.

Hint: Train your employees to ask customers qualifying questions. How did you find us? How was your first experience with us? How can we improve?

Savvy business owners view marketing as an extension of their business, and managing it with loyal partners and a staff that is accountable is a pathway to success. Trust your gut if there is any hesitation on your part and educate yourself with the help of third-party consulting when needed. Digital marketing is complex and is a powerful tool to grow your business, and make your phone ring. ■

Denise Grothouse has an extensive background in international business, branding and marketing. She specializes in digital and social platforms and integrating them with traditional marketing and branding strategies. No stranger to the kitchen and bath industry, she is best known for her work as chief brand officer of Grothouse, Inc., and is the current president of the marketing firm Perfect Six.

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Designer Relies on 'Done It All' Experience

BY AUTUMN MCGARR

Photo: Vicki Bartel Photography

Markie Tuckett, owner of Timber + Plumb, draws on her multi-faceted experience from a previous design firm to deliver complete service.

WINDSOR, ON — For designer Markie Tuckett, starting a business of her own was the natural next step in a career progression that began at another firm, where she started "from the very bottom," in her words.

"I didn't actually start out designing – it was at least a year until I actually started doing some design work," she explains. "So, I was doing everything within the business, like delivery management, ordering site meetings and measurements, working with trades and instructing them on that level. So, I think I built up my business by just literally having the experience and the background of how to run a business. And then, over the years, I've honed my design skill and the overall look that I offer clients."

Tuckett, who was named to the NKBA's 2020 Thirty Under 30 list, founded her own business in 2018, Timber + Plumb, which serves the Windsor-Essex area in Ontario, Canada and offers full-service kitchen and cabinetry design, as well as "à la carte" digital design options for clients outside the service area.

THE VIEW FROM THE BOTTOM

According to Tuckett, her beginnings at the bottom of the ladder in another firm have given her a unique 360-degree view of the design and remodeling process. "I can be totally upfront and honest with every client I have because I know the process front to back," she explains. "My problem-solving skills now are, I would say, pretty good because I've been in so many different scenarios."

Now that Tuckett has brought an employee of her own on board, she wants to pass on the benefits of her comprehensive bottom-to-top experience. "I always tell my employee, 'you're going to start from the bottom. You're going to do the grunt work, you're going to start with service orders and organizing deliveries, managing folders and dropping samples off to clients,'" she says. "She's kind of honed that stuff now, so she's starting to get into the fun design stuff. So, it's exciting because that's how I started."

UNFUSSY AND TIMELESS

Tuckett's clients, despite their diversity in design tastes, all share a desire for spaces that will not only improve their quality of life, but that will stand the test of time. For Tuckett, creating designs that will last means keeping things uncomplicated. "Everything I do is pretty much very simple-looking, but in a very appealing way," she notes. "I'm not into big angles or decorative pieces or anything like that. I always feel like it kind of gets dated, so I try to focus more on simplicity."

Photo: Lively Creative Co.

(Top) This new-build kitchen features an 11' island with Cambria quartz, a freestanding custom hood, a hutch cabinet for dishes and an oversized fridge and freezer for a large family.

Tuckett jazzed up this walk-in pantry with a custom navy color, paired with a floral patterned tile backsplash and ebonized ambrosia countertops and floating shelves.

Unfussy, however, does not mean unthoughtful. "I plan my designs around storage mostly," Tuckett, who specializes in designing

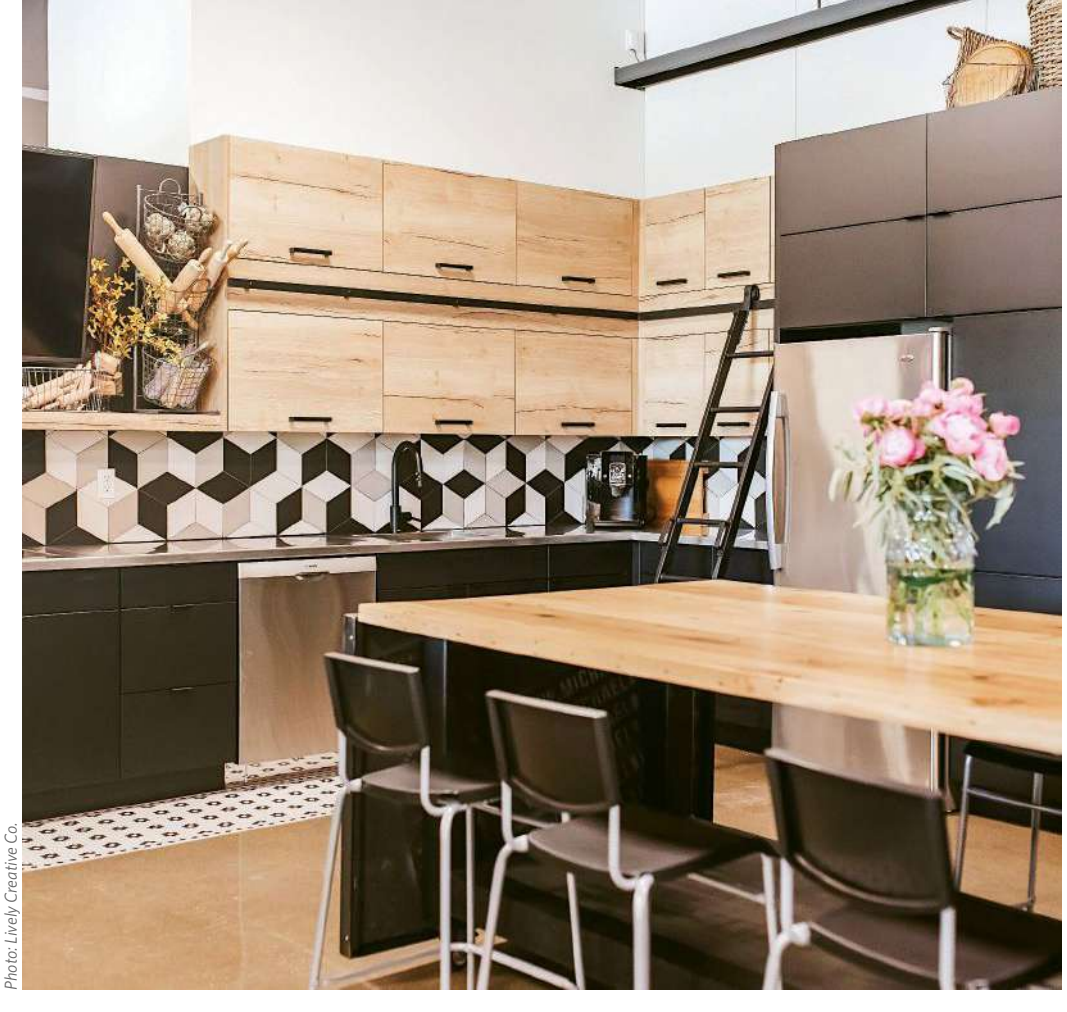


Photo: Lively Creative Co.

Part of a commercial space, this kitchen was built to provide an experience for those who want to learn more about cooking and grilling.

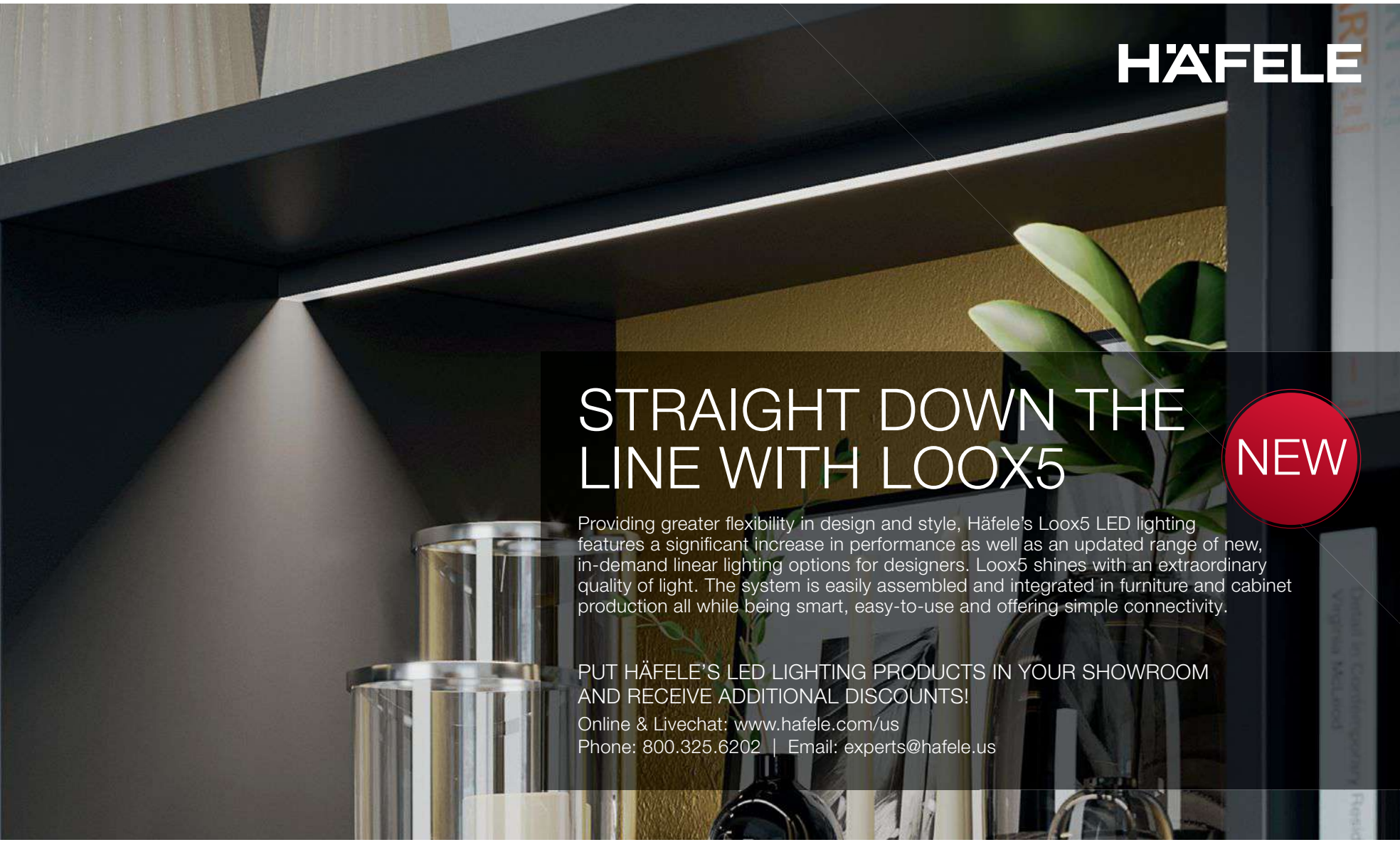
and working with custom cabinetry, says. "When I talk to a client, I usually interview them on what kinds of needs they have for storage and I basically try to give them a lifestyle upgrade. So most feedback I get from clients is that when they start cooking in their new kitchen versus their old, it just makes their everyday life easier."

This storage-first design approach enables Tuckett to work within many different design styles seamlessly. "Some of my projects are mid-century modern, some industrial. I have shabby chic and modern farmhouse clients, I've had ultra-modern kitchens. I'm kind of able to cater to everybody."

GIVING BACK

As a small business owner, Tuckett places great value on supporting other small businesses. "I try to promote other small businesses in the area and create partnerships [through social media], trying to keep the vibe of 'shop local, stay local,'" she says. "For example, we support at least six to seven small businesses for every photo shoot, whether that's flowers or wardrobe, or hair and makeup, or actual photography props. Sometimes we'll pay stagers to come in... And then every time we post a photo, we tag those businesses back in to try and boost them up. Because with the current climate, with COVID and everything, we're trying to make up for small businesses having such a loss over the past couple of years."

In addition to cross-promotion, Tuckett takes her support of small businesses a step further. "I created a grant last year called the 'Stay Golden' grant," she says. "It's a grant we offer to one small business every year, and this year we're actually going to be offering it to two. It's a grant for businesses that are nominated or that apply and have a really good structure for the business, but are just looking for some help. We offer obviously a monetary grant, but then also mentorship." ■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Left: 2021 Innovative Showroom Award Winner Trail Appliances

Social Media's Industry Impact Grows

BY JAMIE GOLD, CKD, CAPS, MCCWC

Social media for the kitchen and bath industry has evolved tremendously since its earliest days, and here's what you should know about this dynamic marketing resource now.

The group traveled from around the United States and even from outside the country. Nineteen design bloggers converged on New York's Winter 2010 Fashion Week event as guests of Delta Faucet's upscale Brizo brand. It was one of the kitchen and bath industry's earliest social media successes.

Posts were written, photos snapped and uploaded, colleagues and the brand tagged, lessons learned: The biggest takeaway – not counting the hands-free kitchen faucets provided to the designers in lieu of payment in those largely pre-industry influencer days – was that social media could drive awareness and engagement for kitchen and bath companies. In the interest of disclosure, I was one of Brizo's Fashion Week guests who came to call ourselves the Blogger 19.

Here are some of the lessons still being learned about social media more than a decade later, shared by voices from across the industry:

- Designer and business coach Claire Jefford;
- Brizo's Senior Brand Manager Lucia McBroom;
- Frank Advertising V.P. Lori Dolnick;
- Modenus owner and social media innovator Veronika Miller;
- Blogger and CEO Steve Sheinkopf of retail chain Yale Appliance;
- Original Blogger 19 member, designer, retailer and business coach Cheryl Clendenon;
- Designer, retailer and design blogger Carla Aston.

APPLIANCE BUYING GUIDE
A step-by-step guide to find the right products for your home project
Published by Yale Appliance
YALE

Photo: Yale Appliance

Offering downloads on your blog builds your email list.

EXPLORE Southern Living
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Chase Rice on Discovering Home (and Bison Farming) Amid the Pandemic
The country singer was always on the road. When COVID-19 struck, he went about making his house his home—for himself and 20 bison.
By Meghan Overdeep | February 11, 2021

Photo: Frank Advertising/Vesta Hardware

Influencer marketing pays off for design industry brands.

BLOGGING

Blogging was one of the first social media success stories, which Social Media Today tracks back to the early 2000s. "Blog is named word of the year" for 2004, the site says, with digital platforms like Blogger and WordPress making it reasonably easy for non-technical design pros to post their thoughts and pictures online.

Brizo wasn't the only brand to leverage the potential of this emerging medium for the industry. Veronika Miller launched Modenus and created a "Tweetup" (event combining in-person and Twitter posting) at the 2011 AD Home Design Show. Its success "made us realize just how impactful the bloggers can be when they appear in a group to cover shows or individual brands," Miller recalls.

She formalized that success with a series of sponsored designer trips called BlogTours. There were 25 of them held at industry events in the U.S. and Europe, generating 25 million impressions on Twitter alone," she shares. BlogTour evolved into Designhounds in 2015 with a presence at the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show every year, an influencer focus beyond just bloggers, and virtual brand-sponsored events during the pandemic.

Aston, who has been blogging for more than a decade, is still bullish on the concept, she says. "I'm now making money off my site. I've created downloadable PDFs for sale and do affiliate linking, but my ad network is where the real passive income lies." She's prioritizing her online business over full-service clientele and shares that virtual consultations really took off during the pandemic last year. "My email consultations were created as a result of people finding my blog via Google and asking me questions. I'm enjoying that quick no-follow-through kind of work," she comments.

Blogging has been a boon for Yale Appliance, too, with one of the most comprehensive guides to this category online. Consumers and professionals both visit, Sheinkopf observes. Between the blog and the retailer's YouTube videos, Yale gets about six to seven million visitors annually, he reports, noting that he produces the content in-house. "I believe in never outsourcing a potential core competency." The blog also offers a free download when you provide your email address.

Photo: Brizo/Jayme Thornton Photography

Brizo gathered 19 design bloggers for one of the first industry social media success stories.

Photo: Modenus

BlogTour showed brands the power of design blogging.

"Building a list of potential clients is one of the most important strategies in generating consistent leads," Jefford says, noting that the type of downloads her firm, Yale Appliance, and Aston all offer on their blogs can be effective in collecting names and email addresses.

IMAGES AND INFLUENCERS

Social media is rich with photo-friendly platforms. Houzz, Instagram and Pinterest leap first to mind. Clendenon reports that Houzz is her most successful social media-based lead generator. "It pays for itself many times over and is the best ROI we have," she states.

While Houzz is home-specific, Instagram and Pinterest are popular general interest sites. "We are spending more dollars now in Pinterest since it's such a great tool for driving traffic to websites," Dolnick comments. "Pinterest is less a social/engagement platform and more of a search engine (think Google). It works equally well for designers and for consumers," the marketing executive reports, adding, "Instagram continues to be a hot point for many clients."

The photo sites – especially Instagram – are magnets for influencers, which is a massive

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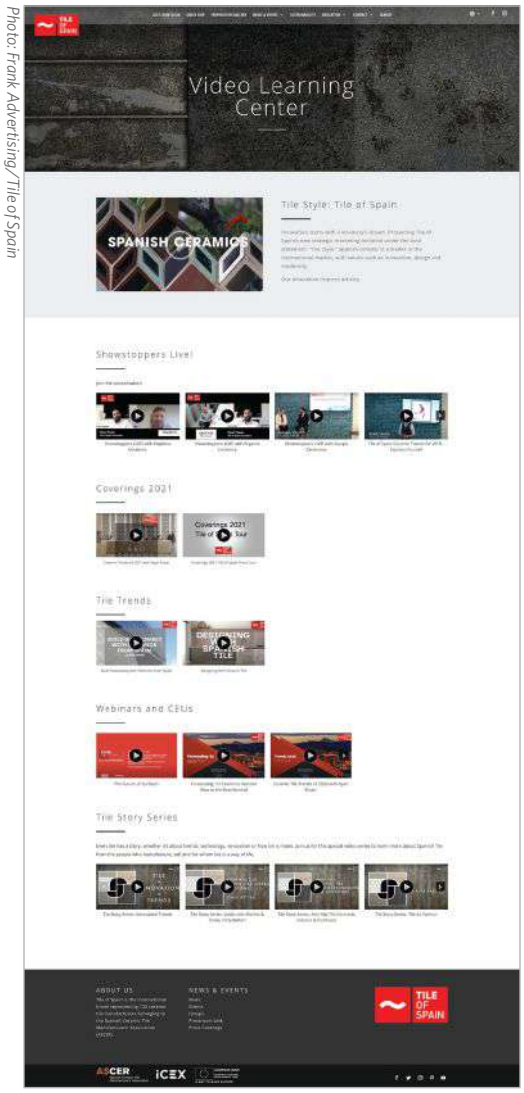

Photo: Frank Advertising/Tile of Spain

Frank Advertising uses videos for B2B and B2C client campaigns.

marketing category propelled by social media. The Influencer Marketing Hub estimates it as a $10 billion segment, something Dolnick probably wouldn't dispute. "We do influencer campaigns for all our clients and they run the range, including contractors, designers and consumers."

Looking ahead, she says, "Influencers will still be an area of growth – but we're targeting more 'stacked' influencers. Posting on Instagram alone isn't enough. They have to be multi-channel and have a blog or vlog [video blog]. User-generated content is going to continue to be hot as quality photography and video is an investment for brands," the marketer comments.

VIDEO EVOLUTION

If you've been active on Instagram or follow social media trends, you probably heard recently that the platform is going to shift much of its focus from photos to videos. "I feel that Instagram is still going to be an important platform for designers," Jefford believes, "not only for acquiring local business, but it's also the best social media channel to establish relationships with brands and obtain sponsorship deals. With more video content being pushed there, such as IGTV and now Reels, Instagram has lots of different options for creating fun and informative content."

"We were saying video, video, video for many years," declares Dolnick, but "it takes a major platform like Instagram to make it a reality for some advertisers." She predicts augmented and virtual reality as the next frontiers. "Forget Zoom – we're going be in a virtual office with other people. It's just a matter of time. We're testing virtual showroom tours and trade show tours now and the results are off the charts. It's going to happen sooner than later," she predicts.

Miller, who is also good at reading industry tea leaves, launched her Design Uncut webcast for design pros during the pandemic last year. The series goes live on Miller's Modenus' Facebook page and in her Facebook Kitchen + Bath Industry Group.

YouTube is Yale Appliance's biggest platform, Sheinkopf says. "Video has become a much larger part of effective social media. People naturally consume video easier as they have been [raised] on TV," he comments. He also predicts some changes in the industry. "I don't think platforms were prepared for the success of TikTok, so you are seeing YouTube Shorts and Instagram Reels be over-indexed as a reaction. Now is a good time to consider short form content," he suggests.

CONTENT CREATION AND OWNERSHIP

Miller confesses to overcoming camera shyness to appear in her Design Uncut videos. Many reading this Trend Spotting can relate, myself included! Fortunately, new creative tools allow you to create videos that feature your brand and your work, without you necessarily having to appear on camera. Canva and Spark Video do for video creation what Blogger and WordPress did for blogging at its beginning.

"The focus going forward can't be on platforms you don't own," cautions Dolnick. "Don't build your social model around followers. Work on engagement. You don't own Facebook and they will likely take followings/Instagram likes away sometime in future," she warns.

Jefford agrees: "The landscape is constantly evolving. You own your list, but nothing is guaranteed with the social media platforms, especially when algorithms are always changing."

LEGACY PLATFORMS

As much as anything can be considered legacy in this young marketing world, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter fit that description and have legitimate places in your plans. Forums like Miller's 2,000-member Kitchen & Bath Industry Group on Facebook and KBtribechat, a decade-long success (which I occasionally guest-host) with more than 10 million impressions per chat, according to its designer/creator Stacy Garcia, are examples of their continuing strength. Dolnick says Facebook is a must-have, but not the cool kid on the block. She also sees her clients embracing LinkedIn as a recruiting tool.

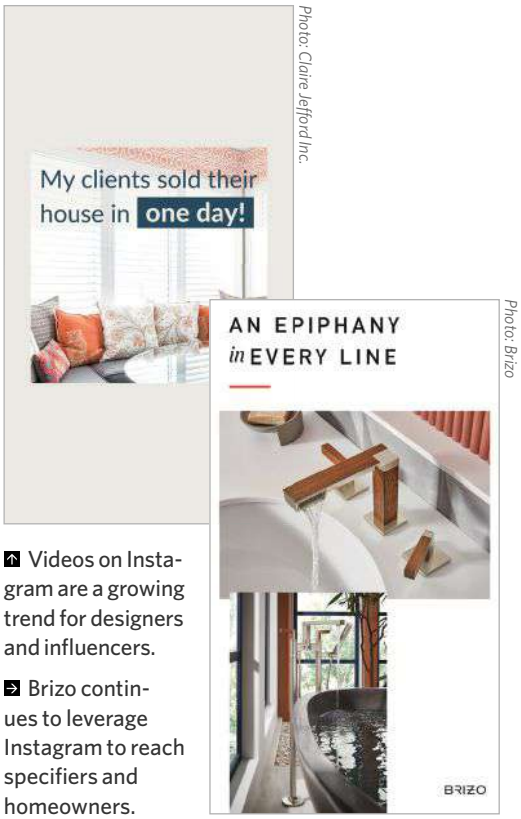

Photo: Claire Jefford Inc.

Photo: Brizo

Videos on Instagram are a growing trend for designers and influencers.

Brizo continues to leverage Instagram to reach specifiers and homeowners.

EMERGING PLATFORMS

Maybe your kids are crazy about the video sensation TikTok, and your cabinet rep invited you to the audio drop-in platform Clubhouse. Brands like Brizo are always evaluating new and emerging platforms, McBroom says. And Miller is planning to integrate TikTok into Design Uncut's social portfolio, she shares.

Numerous designers and brands that have appeared in this publication's pages are hosting engaging, informative discussions on Clubhouse. "It's not brand-friendly, but anywhere quality conversation is taking place is of interest to us," Dolnick says. Think of Clubhouse as interactive, micro-podcasting, where you can listen to experts, but also ask them questions and share your own ideas and experiences.

"TikTok has grown exponentially (it was the most downloaded app in 2020)," Dolnick shares. The audience is youth-oriented, with half younger than 34, but it's huge and won't stay young forever, the marketer muses. "We don't automatically dismiss TikTok creators as influencers, since the really good ones stack their content on multiple platforms."

Even if you're uncertain about investing in emerging sites – there's no guarantee of payoff for your time or money – it's helpful to be where your clients are forming their opinions.

LAST WORDS

This dynamic marketing specialty, once the job of summer interns or your techie nephew, is a serious $62 billion business in the U.S. alone, according to IBISWorld, and more complex than ever. Whether creating compelling content for your own blog or showcasing videos on popular sites, "social media is a serious brand tool for customer service, marketing and traffic," Dolnick comments. ■

Jamie Gold, CKD, CAPS, MCCWC is an author, wellness design consultant and industry speaker. Her third book, Wellness by Design *(Simon & Schuster), published September 2020. You can learn more about her Wellness Market presentations, books, Wellness Wednesdays Clubhouse conversations and consulting services at jamiegold.net.*

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Telling the Tale of Two Bathrooms

BY KIM BERNDTSON

Designers solve the dilemma of how to design one master bathroom for two homeowners with very different personalities by creating two master bathrooms that reflect each of their unique desires and needs.

SHREVEPORT, LA — She's a girly girl – glamorous and old Hollywood with a Beverly Hills hotel vibe. He's a country boy – an avid outdoorsman, hunter and farmer.

When it came time to designing their new-construction, modern Mediterranean-style home, designers at The Cottage in Shreveport, LA, accommodated both personalities by giving each their own master bathroom and closet/dressing area.

"There were two different worlds going on, so it was important that we created interiors that reflected the desires and needs of two different personalities, while blending them together for a cohesive look," says Jamey Briggs, designer, noting a collaboration with Ben Patterson, AIA (architect) and Terry M. Elston (custom residential builder).

"We met consistently to ensure we were all on the same page during the entire project," adds Barbara Mitchell, interior designer, ASID, NCIDQ, LEED AP. "Communication was key to designing a successful project."

'HER' SOCIAL SANCTUARY

For her, that meant creating a personal sanctuary for her own use, as well as a place where she could gather with friends.

"Her bathroom and closet are social spaces, too," says Briggs. "She loves hanging out with her

Custom designed, each cabinet within her master bathroom was created with a particular purpose in mind. For example, her sink vanity is taller than standard height and includes a recessed toe kick to 'lighten' its visual and provide a space for additional lighting.

CUSTOM CABINETRY
Designed with specific storage needs in mind
MARBLE-LOOK PORCELAIN TILE
Replicates the glamourous look of natural stone and lightens the room
FOCAL-POINT TUB
Sited to take advantage of the view of the pool and golf course

Photos: Eric Elberson

TOE-KICK LIGHTING
Ensures adequate lighting, especially at night
DARK, CUSTOM CABINETRY
Exudes a masculine design style
GRAPHIC FLOOR TILE
Resembles stylized wood in a modern design style

girlfriends and spending time with them, dressing and preparing for social events, or just visiting."

To accommodate, the designers kept the bathroom footprint open to allow for adequate movement. To maintain a clean aesthetic, they eliminated wall cabinets and replaced them with large mirrors inset into wainscoting and highlighted with surface-mounted sconces.

"She wanted a very open space with a clean look," explains Mitchell. "One big request from her was for lots of mirrors. She wanted it to be expansive and look visually large."

To further enhance the light, bright aesthetic, marble-look 24"x48" porcelain tile from Artistic Tile clads the floor and alcove that sets off the focal-point tub, which is sited to take advantage of the view of the pool and golf course. A privacy screen, which can be remotely operated from inside, provides discretion when needed. A nearby WarmlyYours towel warmer adds to the niche's lavishness, as does the radiant floor heat that runs throughout the room.

The designers extended the porcelain tile into the steam shower and accented it with a natural stone mosaic. A bench, body sprays and multiple showerheads further the spa-like atmosphere.

While marble-esque tile fulfills a maintenance-free need in certain areas, the real deal, specifically Bianco Rhino marble, adorns the Wood-Mode vanities, which are sheathed in a custom color with gold painted details and Hardware Resources pulls. Custom designed, each cabinet was created with a particular purpose in mind. Faucets from California Faucets' Montara Collection are also featured.

"We were very specific about what we included, where," says Mitchell, "especially since she is left-handed, which changed where we would intuitively place certain pullouts. We also included plenty of storage for tall cans of hair spray as well as outlets inside drawers."

Her sink vanity is also taller than standard height and includes a recessed toe kick to 'lighten' its visual and provide a space for lighting.

Wood-Mode cabinetry is carried into her closet, which features a secondary make-up/hair station, coffee bar and refrigerator, island with luggage drawers, jewelry storage and glass-front cabinets for displaying special handbags and shoes. A portion of the wall cabinetry also includes a three-way dressing mirror.

A metal mesh, Gold Leaf Pulse chandelier from Corbett Lighting – discovered on one of the many shopping trips with the homeowners – finishes the room.

'HIS' MASCULINE RETREAT

Although smaller in scale, his master bathroom retreat includes several well-planned amenities, too. Specifically, since his space is an interior room, special consideration was given to lighting.

"There are no exterior walls in his bathroom, so there are no windows," explains Briggs. "That's why we incorporated motion-activated toe-kick lighting. When he walks into the space at night, it also acts as a night light."

Marble-look porcelain tile combines with complementary yet contrasting floor mosaics and a geometric accent wall to create a shower that is more interesting than a plain white box. A bench and multiple showerheads add to the spa-like appeal.

"Lighting was also important because we used darker colors in his bathroom," adds Mitchell, noting a reference to the custom Wood-Mode cabinetry in maple finished in Matte Twilight and accented with Top Knobs hardware, a quartzite countertop and Brizo Levoir faucetry.

Like her bathroom, the designers paid special attention to the cabinetry layout, making sure to create adequate storage to meet his needs. As such, pullouts are positioned to each side of his sink and outlets for charging razors, toothbrushes, etc. are included in a bank of drawers. A hamper is located near the entrance to his closet.

"His wife made sure to include storage that functioned for his needs, and that would help him stay organized and tidy," says Mitchell.

Custom cabinetry extends into his closet, which features special capacities such as belt and hat storage and an island with an electronic charging station, a watch winding device and a bench. Clear glass fronts on closet drawers give him quick and easy visual access to clothing selections.

"He likes to keep his polo shirts in the drawers, organized by color," she continues. "If he is looking for his purple or orange shirts, he can easily find them!"

Tile played an important role in his bathroom, too. For example, his floor features graphic, large-format 24"x48" Kauri porcelain tile from Artistic Tile.

"It looks like stylized wood," says Briggs. "It's a beautiful dark colorway with a masculine vibe that maintains a modern design style."

In his shower they repeated the marble-look porcelain tile from her bathroom, combining it with complementary yet contrasting floor mosaics and an accent wall with tile from Walker Zanger.

"Using different patterns creates interest so the shower isn't just a plain, white box," Briggs indicates, adding that a bench and several showerheads adds to the spa-like appeal. ■

HIS AND HER GUEST BATHS

While his-and-her master bathrooms dominate the bathroom scene in the home, guests' needs were also considered and addressed in multiple powder rooms.

"The home is sort of set up with 'his' and 'her' wings," explains Jamey Briggs. "Each wing also has a guest bath associated with it."

For the guest bath located near his man cave, the designers created a masculine design style represented by elements including a reclaimed cypress custom floating vanity designed and built by The Cottage.

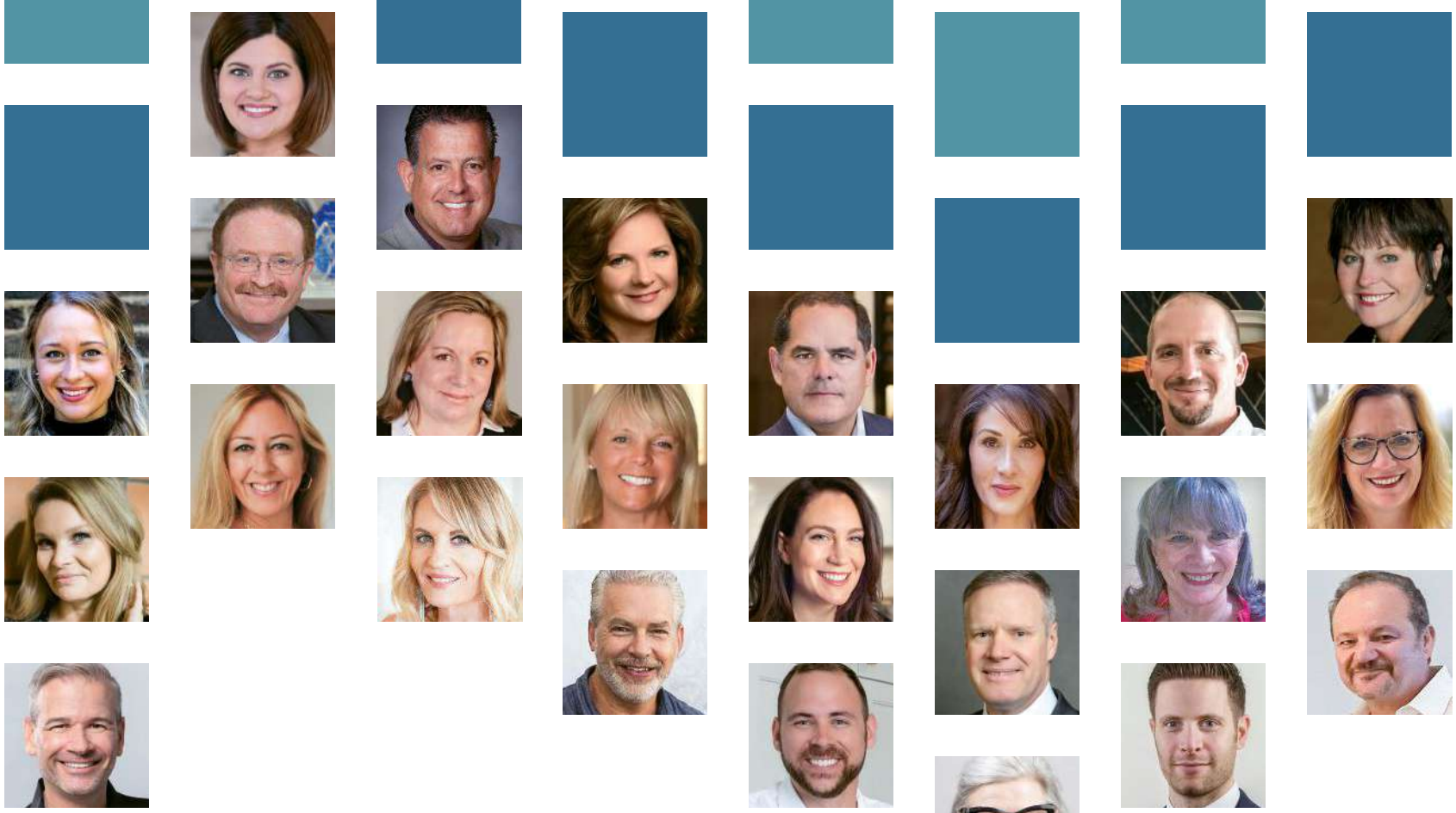
"The vanity highlights traditional elements with a modern spin," says Barbara Mitchell.

Dark porcelain tile clads the floor and complements the Negresco leathered granite vanity top, while a Kohler single-handle faucet echoes the dark finish of the Hudson Valley Lighting sconces.

The focal-point accent wall showcases the work of local artist Ashely Beck, who created the geode-inspired painting on acrylic.

The main powder room was created with the girls and glamour in mind, as exemplified by the glitzy silver and black design theme. The custom vanity, designed and built by The Cottage, features mirrored door/drawer fronts and a custom finish that plays off of the custom, textured wall treatment.

On the floor, Daltile tile borders an inset of geometric Walker Zanger tile accented with a chrome Schluter.



THE INNOVATORS

KBDN celebrates the fifth annual Innovators class, recognizing leadership, mentoring, education, design and the ability to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

FROM VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION to safety protocols to material and labor shortages, members of the kitchen and bath design industry have had challenges in 2021 unlike any other year prior. Customers and projects abound as the country heads into a post-pandemic era, yet constraints and restrictions require a reliance on acquired knowledge and a constantly changing stream of information.

These challenges can knock even the top industry pros off balance. The key to regaining equilibrium and continuing on a successful path is to be flexible and adjust to circumstances as they arise. While many have weathered the storm of the past few years, others have risen above and not only carried their companies and employees through the mire, but have reached out and helped others in their journey, as well. Industry leaders continue to head committees and associations, educate and mentor professionals with less experience and expertise, and deliver high-quality and innovative design to their clients.

Kitchen & Bath Design News honors these industry leaders in its pages every year by naming The Innovators, a group of industry professionals who are setting the standard for excellence in the design industry. Nominated by their peers and then reviewed by the *KBDN* nominating committee, the 24 Innovators for 2021 are an exemplary group of individuals who are moving the kitchen and bath industry forward. On the next six pages, *Kitchen & Bath Design News* presents its fifth annual class of Innovators.

Todd Atkins

Designer offers new take on finish and texture combinations

As the kitchen designer of The 2021 New American Home, Todd Atkins, senior kitchen designer for the Phil Kean Design Group, in Winter Park, FL, showcased his mastery in mixing unexpected styles and aesthetics to create a leading-edge, yet classic kitchen design that is ahead of its time. This "modern" kitchen showcases soft, warm tones and a balance of modern and traditional elements that work together to achieve a high-end, sophisticated setting.

For example, a traditional 10' walnut hutch acts as the anchor of this modern kitchen, recessed into the 14' wall and surrounded floor-to-ceiling with a soft white quartz. The refrigerator/freezer and pantry are hidden behind a high-gloss, champagne-colored panel wall, framed in a carbon-stained 8" Alder wood surround. The surround is duplicated on the range wall that blends classic inset base units painted in cream with mirrored upper cabinetry and a custom hood in chevron walnut panels with bronze metal trim. Then, kitchen finishes are rounded out with a gold faucet, refrigerator pulls in gunmetal, brushed nickel sconces, silver island pendant and gold pulls on the range wall cabinetry and on the walnut hutch.

The seasoned interior architect and designer's new take on combining finishes and textures is exciting innovation in kitchen design, note colleagues.

Cyndy Cantley

Elegant but practical designs win recognition

A founding member of the Alabama Chapter of the National Kitchen & Bath Association and an active member of the American Society of Interior Designers and current membership at large chairman of that organization, Cyndy Cantley, CKD, Allied ASID, of Cantley & Company, in Birmingham, AL, has an affinity for classic aesthetics and gracefully marries timeless appeal with modern sensibility. Her designs are elegant but practical, revealing a keen awareness towards the lifestyle of every client and their family. With an eye for style and sophistication, Cantley has created stunning designs for homes throughout the U.S.

She is an award-winning, nationally published designer, featured in *Southern Living*, *Bon Appetit*, *Southern Accents*, *Southern Home*, *House Beautiful* and other magazines. She has been a finalist in the Sub-Zero Wolf Kitchen Design Contest and won several regional prizes. Cantley also judged a recent NKBA Kitchen Design Contest and has held numerous positions with Alabama NKBA, including president.

Cantley mentors design students at several universities each semester, passing along her knowledge to young designers. She also gives her time to the community, sitting on numerous boards, including professional organizations such as NKBA and ASID, the Birmingham Museum of Art and the Birmingham Zoo. She also serves as a deacon in her church.

Dan Bawden

Contractor champions Universal Design and Aging in Place

Dan Bawden, CAPS, CGR, GMB, GMR, CGP, owner, Legal Eagle Contractors, in Houston, TX, has educated and trained not only himself but countless others, sharing his 35 years of experience in the industry.

Predicting the rapidly growing needs of America's senior population, Bawden started the CAPS (Certified Aging in Place Specialist) program in 1980 for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). The designation was created by Bawden and his fellow NAHB Remodelers, along with the AARP. He was invited to Japan to promote Aging in Place practices and has worked with major influencers to promote Universal Design within the remodeling field. He instructs courses in CAPS semi-annually.

He was the first remodeler to serve as president of the Greater Houston Builders Association and went on to serve as national chairman of NAHB Remodelers.

Legal Eagle Contractors is a full-service residential remodeling firm that incorporates Universal Design, Aging in Place and Accessible Design concepts into kitchen and bath renovations, custom homes, additions, whole-house, remodeling and outdoor living spaces.

Bawden's showroom is a living showcase of Universal Design features and products that demonstrate to clients how this approach to design and building can be integrated seamlessly into their renovation projects.

Madeleine Dymling

Mentoring young professionals is key to the future of design

Madeleine Dymling, LEED AP, CAPS, AKBD, believes in being generous with her knowledge by mentoring novice professionals.

Dymling's own path began when she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design and Furniture Design from Kendall College of Art and Design (now a Ferris State affiliate) in Grand Rapids, MI. Her first jobs out of school were with large architectural firms in New York City. Among other jobs throughout her career, she was a senior designer for a replacement hospital for the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, FL.

Dymling next joined a boutique architectural firm that did high-end residential projects and boutique hotels, although her first residential experience was as a student at Kendall when she assisted kitchen designer and fellow *KBDN* Innovator Linda Larish, CMKBD, with drafting.

When she started Flatbrook & Co., the work seemed to gravitate towards kitchens and baths, large projects where an addition was involved or a total relocation of the kitchen or bath. Today, she is the president of Flatbrook & Co., in Canaan, NY, a company that takes pride in shaping new emerging talents. Flatbrook is a multi-disciplinary company that works in a variety of mediums, such as ceramics, fine woodworking, metal work and custom prints, all of which are incorporated in various Flatbrook projects.

THE INNOVATORS

Salvatore Ferro

Remodeler sets extreme standards of excellence

Fans of "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" may remember Salvatore Ferro, CR, CKD, president and CEO of Alure Home Improvements, in Commack, NY, as an eight-time lead project manager for the television series.

Taking his experience from the show and the demand of the market for a quick and efficient remodeling job, Ferro pioneered a systematic approach to kitchen and bathroom remodeling, being able to do a complete gut remodel of a bathroom in five days and kitchen in 10, drastically cutting the time of being in a customer's home.

This alternative approach became a separate division from Alure's custom kitchen and bathroom remodeling, and Ferro was able to grow that division into being just as successful as the custom division.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ferro introduced a design-while-distancing concept to home remodeling by utilizing zoom meetings to get the ball rolling for kitchen and bathroom remodeling projects. This kept the company moving forward even though in-person meetings with prospective customers was not possible.

Ferro received the Industry Legend Award from the Home Improvement Management Summit (HIMS) for his innovation, dedication and leadership, saying that his "creativity, improvisation, risk taking and willingness to share have set a high standard for those who seek excellence in the home-improvement industry."

Karen Hockley

Helping young designers achieve their dreams

Young designers often tell Karen Hockley, CMKBD, CAPS, owner, Kitchens by Karen, in Enola, MI, that they would like to be able to download her knowledge of the kitchen and bath industry. With her writing, blogging and courses, her goal is to do just that.

Hockley is the moderator of three Facebook kitchen and bath design groups, where her goal is to help designers reach whatever pinnacle they can to achieve their dreams. In recent years, she has spent time creating material and writing, including a course on kitchen ventilation basics, which she then turned into a blog, Exciting Range Hood Options for Gas Ranges and the course, Selling for Designers.

There are so many pitfalls for new designers, Hockley notes, adding that designers today need mentors more than ever to guide them and give them a firm grasp of kitchen design and construction.

Hockley recounts that she gained her knowledge of the kitchen and bath industry by going to every in-person NKBA course available. She took classes from industry icon Ellen Cheever, as well. Many of the companies she worked for had extensive knowledge-base training for cabinetry, countertops, faucets and bath products, and she absorbed it all.

Tracy Grosspietsch

Virtual project management removes clients' fear barrier

Tracy Grosspietsch, CKBR, UDCP, director of sales and design at AB&K Bath and Kitchen, in Greenfield, WI, has become a critical voice in promoting adaptive, positive change. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, Grosspietsch moved to transform AB&K's project sales, design and delivery system into a safer, well-documented experience. Pivoting from face-to-face meetings, Grosspietsch's virtual project-management system, developed while the AB&K showroom was closed (apart from safety-enforced, appointment-only finish selection visits) is actually improving how designers, clients and contractors work together.

Creating and offering how-to videos for homeowners, including measuring space/dimensions, the industry pro leverages virtual guest spots on local TV/radio (The Morning Blend and NARI Home Improvement Show) to promote AB&K's new sales/construction process. Training staff on Zoom herself, Grosspietsch has enabled a more flexible design team that can present design concepts/reviews, coordinate pricing/schedules and sign contracts through email, SMS, 3-D software, Zoom and FaceTime technology. AB&K's construction site protocols include Porta-Potties, dust barriers and a masked, two-contractor limit.

Grosspietsch is successfully encouraging new ideas and solutions by establishing the AB&K staff as a leader in health/safety protocols, establishing AB&K staff members as creative problem solvers using technology to overcome challenges, and removing the fear barrier by creating a safe process for anxious homeowners.

Jennifer Hutton

Reimagining the remodeling and new-home process

Jennifer Hutton, design manager, Grau Building Co., in Durham, NC, is an innovator in the design, building and construction field in her area. By incorporating her knowledge of kitchen and bath design with additional aspects of new-home building and remodeling luxury spaces, she reimagines the process for homeowners.

Upon relocation from Buffalo, NY, Hutton identified Grau, a firm without internal design services, and introduced a new facet to the service-based building experience. Fortunately, her long-term goals of redefining the client experience worked in tandem with Grau's vision to bolster its one-of-a-kind approach to construction. Previously, homeowners outsourced a designer when necessary. Hutton has redefined the role to work directly with clients on a design and project management level by streamlining the process and acting as a liaison between trades and owners.

Hutton works on boutique, custom homes, large-scale remodels and assists in various aspects of design, most notably kitchen and bath. Her passion lies in color coordination, material selection and creating innovative design solutions that inspire a client's own sense of style.

By spearheading what is hopefully the new normal in boutique home building firms, she emphasizes a more collaborative effort between all partners in the construction industry, including tradesmen, designers, engineers, architects and homeowners.

Jill Jarrett

Engineering a boutique design firm through diligence

Although she graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a B.S. in Industrial Engineering, Jill Jarrett, CMKBD, CAPS, owner and principal designer, Jarrett Design LLC, in Emmaus, PA, decided to pursue her passion for design by taking classes with the NKBA and working for a local kitchen dealer.

Her engineering degree and experience were the groundwork for the technical and ergonomic challenges that are abundant in the kitchen and bath industry. She quickly became known for top-notch luxury kitchen and bath design through projects in the Lehigh Valley, Philadelphia's Main Line, the New Jersey shore and other long-distance locations.

When Jarrett began her career, her home was her showroom and her presentations consisted of hand-drawn elevations and perspectives. Her process has evolved into a full-service, comprehensive one that includes very detailed presentations featuring Chief Architect plans that communicate every detail to the homeowner and contractors. The designer takes the time to mentor local students in the NKBA-accredited program at the local community college by hosting information nights and offering shadowing opportunities and internships.

The company's commitment to client-centered design has garnered recognition from industry partners, including eight years of customer service awards from Houzz as well as Houzz's Best of Design for the category of most popular portfolios.

Kimberly Kerl

Designer inspires by sharing years of experience

Kimberly Kerl, owner, Kustom Home Design, in Greer, SC, inspires her colleagues through her work as an NKBA leader and creative thinker. She shares 27 years of design and business experience with colleagues through "Voices of the Industry" classes, CEU presentations and interviews with industry publishers. Kerl has also fostered a culture of collaboration within the kitchen and bath industry through her work with NKBA and by helping local suppliers create referral networks for products they don't sell.

Recently, she partnered with a local appliance store to create a unique kitchen-design course for homeowners and kitchen and bath professionals who want to up their design game. This course educates homeowners on the design process and provides the tools needed to move forward with a kitchen design or renovation.

After opening her own residential design firm in 2012, Kerl volunteered as an officer with her local Piedmont Blue Ridge Carolina NKBA chapter and will be serving her eighth year as an officer with that chapter. Even though she served two consecutive terms as president and believed her business could use more of her attention, she made the move to stay on another term once the COVID-19 pandemic hit and another volunteer could not be found.

James Justice

Remodeler finds success by diverging from a single lane

In his 35-year career, James Justice, owner, Architectural Justice, in Medina, OH, went from a one-man operation to having a team of more than 50 in two locations. He has grown his company, Architectural Justice, into a leading design firm and one of the largest stocking stone fabricators in northeast Ohio.

In 2017 Justice expanded the business and designed and built a unique showroom in Strongsville, OH. The multi-concept space showcases the company's design/build capabilities while also offering artisan cuisine in the Cafe, curated home goods in the Gallery, and culinary events in the Marble Kitchen.

In February of 2021, he launched a new product line, the Fittings Metal Collection. Inspired to create the collection due to the void in the industry for metal accessory pieces for the kitchen, the product line provides designers a resource for metal cabinet accessories that are easy to order and specify, with each product being offered in a wide variety of industry-standard sizes.

Instead of staying in one lane, Justice has molded his business into one that can do it all – from design and remodeling to stone fabrication, woodworking, metalwork and more.

Kamer Kosedag

New concept showroom delivers on all aspects of remodeling

Always looking for ways to innovate and improve his showroom to create a unique space to his customers, Kamer Kosedag, CKBD, founder and CEO of South Bay Design Center and Atrium Design Center, in Lomita, CA, is about to finish an expansion to a 30,000-sq.-ft., one-of-a-kind, ultra-modern building where he is creating a new concept. His vision is to have all aspects of home remodeling at a customer's fingertips under one roof. He is bringing together everything that clients need to complete their projects – appliances, flooring, lighting, cabinets, fixtures, countertops and professional designers – in one place.

The new showroom showcases over 18 full kitchens, 10 bathrooms, laundry rooms and built-ins and sits directly on the Pacific Coast Highway in the heart of the South Bay, with neighboring towns such as Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills Estates, Torrance, Hermosa Beach and Manhattan Beach.

Kosedag also worked on a showhouse in Redondo Beach at the same time he was building the Atrium. The showhouse is super high-end and features a dance floor made of glass, a glass bridge to a spa, infinity pool and more.

THE INNOVATORS

Rosario Mannino

Architects and kitchen designers share concepts

Although he's worked on large-scale commercial construction and renovation projects, Rosario Mannino has a passion for residential design. Eight years after graduating from Florida Atlantic University with a Bachelor's degree in Architecture, Mannino founded the architect-led design-build company RS|MANNINO Architecture + Construction, in Rutherford, NJ.

Just three years after founding his business, he launched his own custom cabinetry collection to appeal to his growing affluent clients who are inspired by unique designs that are timeless, classic and high-end. He researched numerous cabinetry lines and hired a full-time dedicated kitchen designer with luxury kitchen experience to help create clients' dream kitchens.

Adding kitchen design to the overall architectural process has improved the company, as both architects and kitchen designers can share ideas and implement the other teammate's perspective on design and construction. The long-term plan is to launch private label collections with multiple showrooms open to the public.

The client experience has improved significantly since adding the custom cabinetry service. Clients are paired with knowledgeable and experienced designers and are now included in the design process much earlier than when the company used outside kitchen designers. This comprehensive design approach helps clients understand all the decisions that go into a home remodel.

Mary Miksch

Designer inspires and leads others to succeed

With both an MBA and a degree and background in architecture, Mary Miksch, LEED AP, CAPS, Assoc. AIA, of Neil Kelly Co., in Portland, OR, combines her gift and passion for design with an equal talent for inspiring and developing people.

During her eight years as a design/sales consultant, she consistently specified, estimated and delivered smartly designed projects that earned her clients' trust and praise, while creating new tools and techniques that have been deployed throughout the company.

When the pandemic disrupted normal business operations, Miksch conceived of and launched Neil Kelly University, an online space where employees connected to share best practices and record classes focused on everything from design education to new software to internal company operations. NKU helped the Neil Kelly team leverage the time available during the shutdown into an opportunity for growth. During this same period Miksch was completing her MBA through the University of Oregon. Her Capstone project was focused on the generational transformation of the workplace and how investing in people improves the bottom line.

Now director of organizational development and training, Miksch is a member of the Neil Kelly Leadership Team. Her work focuses on finding ways to improve operational effectiveness while fostering a commitment to Neil Kelly's long-standing culture and values.

Maria Martin

App creates a collaborative process for clients

Maria Martin, ASID, TX RID, founder of Design Appy, in The Hills, TX, is an interior designer with 20-plus years of experience who uses design-driven technology and content to improve client experiences.

Martin listened to her clients and heard they wanted the experience of a rendering without the amount of time between appointments. At the time, the majority of drawing and documentation was still being done on paper back in the office, and she found that clients were disappointed that the process would not be like the design television shows they watched.

She has learned that clients love a collaborative design conception process; it makes them feel safe and heard. These clients envision their new home coming together alongside a trained professional.

As a result of her work, Martin founded an iPad application, Design Appy, that allows quick generation of scale tile drawings and elevations for bathrooms and kitchens. It draws spaces to scale and allows the use of real finishes for visualization and 2D rendering and specification. She was awarded a "Ones to Watch Scholarship" from ASID in 2019 for the work on this application.

Martin also hosts a weekly Clubhouse room, Designer Discussions, for home design professionals to learn about branding, marketing, business and public relation tools. The popularity has catapulted it to a podcast, Design Discussions, that launched in September 2021.

Lori Miya

Knowledge is key to staying ahead for this designer

Lori Miya, design principal and owner, Miya Interiors and Design, in Layton, UT, knew early on in her career that knowledge would be the key to staying at the forefront of the design industry.

Miya works closely with architects, contractors, trades and vendors, and has been a brand ambassador with leading industry manufacturers, including Monogram and Café Appliances, Rowe Furniture, Revel Woods, Regina Andrew, Jaipur and Shadow Catchers. She thrives on sharing her knowledge and experience with peers and has participated in panels at High Point Market and on various podcasts.

The last two decades have been spent creating luxurious spaces for clients. Miya is known for creating fresh, smart and livable luxury, and her hyper-focused attention on business and project management allows the clients to fully enjoy the design process. With an eye for finding the unusual, Miya and her team members bring diverse skill sets to the table, incorporating the nuances of their clients' daily lives into any design aesthetic. She is also a flooring expert and holds a flooring contractor license, something quite uncommon for designers.

Her accomplishments include multiple Best Kitchen, Best Master Bath, Best Interior Design and Best Floor Plan from the HBA Northern Wasatch Parade of Homes.

Kevin Mullen

Personal experience leads to creation of a health standard

Kevin Mullen, president, Empire Kitchen and Bath, in Calgary, Alberta, is on a mission to change the way the industry builds cabinetry and homes. In 2013, after the historic floods in his city, he developed an acute chemical sensitivity, which had a profound effect on his life, including his ability to go to work at his facility. His personal journey back to health led him to question the products used in the construction of cabinetry and homes, as well as the potential effects on homeowners.

Mullen began to research the materials being used, what kinds of chemicals they contained, and how they impacted living and working environments. He tested many of the findings in his own home and ultimately in the construction of his new showroom facility, which was completed in 2017. This marked the start of his journey to create the RESIDE Healthy Standard.

In 2020, under his leadership, Empire Kitchen & Bath achieved GREENGUARD Gold Certification for its Avant Cabinets line (one of only a couple of manufacturers worldwide that have achieved certification for cabinetry) and GREENGUARD 3036 certification for its inaugural healthy home, making Empire the first in North America and only other manufacturer outside of Japan to achieve this certification.

Judith Neary

Offering a comprehensive learning experience

As a result of her association with the National Kitchen & Bath Association, Judith Neary, CMKBD, of Roadside Attractions Design Studio, in Vashon, WA, has had the opportunity to instruct professional development and certification preparatory classes across North America. As one of the tenured professional instructors for NKBA, she provides a comprehensive learning experience to designers of all skill levels. Her current work includes lead content coordinator and contributing subject matter expert for the soon-to-be-released revised and updated NKBA "Kitchen And Bath Planning Guidelines" as well as other professional development projects.

Neary has lectured at the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show and other industry events about the business side of design. She has also been a featured guest for "A Well-Designed Business" with LuAnn Nigara at her trade event and on her podcasts.

Her design practice serves a single zip code (Vashon Island, WA), where she is known for doing "weird" really well. In 2014 she and her husband established a non-profit to honor the life of their son. As director for the non-profit, Rjs Kids, her current project is building a multi-use outdoor recreation park that includes skateboarding, a pump track and public art features in support of underserved community members. The project includes apprentice training programs partnered with skilled craftsman and artists to create the art features in the park.

Leah Muller

Technology ensures projects aren't halted by pandemic

Whether it be implementing the newest design trends seamlessly with timeless methods and pieces, researching how lighting can impact and influence a space, or utilizing technology to help clients with the design process, Leah Muller, ASID, lead designer, Leah Muller Interiors, in Vero Beach, FL, is always updating her process.

When the pandemic began in March 2020, things initially came to a standstill. As a result, changes needed to be made because projects could not come to a halt. Through Zoom meetings and online client portals, Muller was able to continue her work for her clients while keeping herself, her clients and her employees safe and happy. Through the new online client portal, clients could see how their project was progressing. Updates to fabric or furniture selections were revised automatically on the portal.

Muller also became the face of "coastal modern," coining the term and becoming renowned for her style. As a result, she began developing a business for those who didn't think they could afford or didn't need a slew of services but rather an accessory here or there. With an e-commerce store, she will be able to offer her design expertise to all ranges of clients and budgets.

Jeremy Parcels

Industry involvement leads to recognition

Jeremy Parcels, CKBD, owner, Parcels Design Studio, in Lakewood, CO, has a passion for creating beautiful, functional spaces. His other passion is contributing to the kitchen and bath industry through involvement in the Florida and Colorado NKBA chapters.

After studying architecture at the University of South Florida, Parcels went back to work for his family's remodeling business. This led to his involvement with the NKBA Central Florida chapter, where he served as communications chair, president and chapter representative.

In 2016 the designer moved to Denver, where he jumped right back into volunteering, this time for the NKBA Rocky Mountain Chapter, where he served as communications chair and 2020-2021 chapter president. He has been helping with NKBA certification classes and the chapter's annual design competition, the Peak Awards, which he has won six times, including People's Choice Kitchen in 2020.

Parcels was recently recognized at KBIS 2021, being named chapter president of the year as well as chapter officer of the year by the NKBA's national board of directors.

He remains in demand in the industry, having spoken at Coverings, KBIS and the Southeast Building Conference. He has particular expertise in European cabinetry, which was the subject of his "Voices From The Industry" session program for KBIS.

THE INNOVATORS

John Petrie

Designer serves industry as leader, mentor and educator

John Petrie, CMKBD, owner and designer of Mother Hubbard's Custom Cabinetry, in Mechanicsburg, PA, is known for his untiring devotion to sharing his expertise and leadership to keep the kitchen and bath industry thriving. He teaches and mentors his designers to be the best versions of themselves so that they can serve the community to the best of their ability.

Having earned his CKD, CBD and CMKBD credentials from the NKBA by the age of 27, Petrie goes the extra mile to share his knowledge and make sure kitchen and bath professionals are at the top of their game, encouraging them to participate in continuing education and training events.

He served as national NKBA president in 2014 and was involved in the behind-the-scenes work to co-locate the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show and the International Builders Show. He understood how the association between the two events would help KBIS thrive, and he worked hard to help make it happen, serving as president the year Design & Construction Week came to life. He is the only second-generation NKBA president; his father, Les Petrie, served as president in 2003.

He also participates in numerous NKBA discussions and is a subject-matter expert in areas such as the NKBA badge program and certification.

Ginger Rabe

Learning and sharing knowledge is an ongoing legacy

Taking pride in custom designing each kitchen so that each has its own identity, Ginger Rabe, founder of Ginger Rabe Designs, LLC, in Carlsbad, CA, focuses on current trends as well as what is timeless.

With a Master's Degree in architectural building within sustainable design from Jefferson University in Philadelphia, Rabe is now a professor of the Master's program at the Design Institute of San Diego. This position allows her to share her knowledge of the kitchen and bath industry and sustainable design.

Rabe is on the board of the NKBA of Southern California chapter, and is also on the speakers bureau for the San Diego Green Building Council and the advisory council for Palomar College Interior Design Department. In addition, she gives master classes on kitchen design, and is a TedX speaker on healthy spaces.

In 2020, she received the Power Business Woman Award, and in 2021 received an award for the San Diego Favorite in Kitchen Design and Construction.

Proficient in design-build, Rabe reports that she will be getting her general contractor's license this year, as her firm also builds custom homes. Her furniture line includes five unique pieces – each named after someone in her family – that pair perfectly with her cabinet designs.

Angela Poirrier

Recognition by peers doesn't come with a title

Angela Poirrier, CAPS, isn't just a designer. According to her peers, Poirrier – owner and designer, Acadian House Design + Renovation, in Baton Rouge, LA – is a leader in an industry that is constantly evolving. She loves learning as well as passing along her expertise to others. From attending KBIS to more local NKBA and HBA meetings, she uses her insights to drive the industry forward. Among her initiatives are maintaining a regularly updated blog and hosting over 100 seminars to keep both peers and clients abreast of the latest trends and developments.

Within her own business, she has developed a system and process for every step along the project timeline. She then monitors and analyzes these processes to ensure they remain both effective and profitable for her team. Meanwhile, her marketing plan has allowed her to know the return on investment of every dollar spent and to forecast well into the future.

Although it may not come with a title, being recognized as a leader among her colleagues is among Poirrier's proudest accomplishments. Through her own drive to learn and grow within the kitchen and bath industry, she has become a go-to for others seeking to understand everything from successful marketing and client relations to hiring employees and subcontractors.

Nicholas Vanderhovel

Luxury is a feeling and perception that is obtainable

An innovator not only because of his designs but in what it means to be a professional designer and how that translates into a design experience for clients, Nicholas Vanderhovel is one of the youngest designers in the country to have achieved his Certified Master Kitchen and Bath Designer from the NKBA. Vanderhovel, CMKBD, CAPS, CLIPP, the owner and designer of Kitchen NV, in Pinckney, MI, achieved the certification at age 32 and is said to be one of only a handful of people in Michigan with the title.

The designer is a purist when it comes to function and aesthetics and curating a space. He has worked on every side of design – from installation to drawing to material selection – in order to anticipate client needs and educate them.

Vanderhovel believes that luxury doesn't have to be unobtainable. Rather, luxury has to do with how a person is treated and whether that person's needs are met. He always wants a client to leave with that feeling, and that is what has led him on his quest for knowledge, reaching out to other leaders in the industry to learn more, and working with manufacturers to improve processes and products. He is dedicated to mentoring others, as well.

INTRODUCING

KHAKI

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Amazing Masters

When given the opportunity, designers create spaces that go above and beyond basic.

BY KIM BERNDTSON

At its most basic, any master bathroom with a sink, toilet and shower or bathtub can meet essential hygiene needs. However, when asked to do more, designers' creativity soars to go above and beyond basic to amazing.

Think expanded and/or reconfigured footprints that better accommodate comforts and conveniences. Think unusual and glamorous materials and finishes that transform the aesthetics of the room. Think design elements and products that promote wellness and encourage relaxation within personal sanctuaries.

This month, *KBDN* asked designers to share amazing master bathroom projects that elevate basic to amazing.

BATHROOM 'ART'

After reconfiguring entirely new interior spaces during the renovation of this four-level home, Gregory Hall and Emanuel Rodriguez Garcia, co-founders of Veritas Design Group & Studio in San Francisco, CA, carved out a large third-floor room designated for the new master bathroom. With such a large footprint, the designers opted to expand some of the conventional bathroom elements to create a spa-like retreat for their clients.

"We took advantage of the grand space and chose to exaggerate some of the typical bathroom ideas, turning them into art pieces," says Hall.

For example, each of the three zones – the tub, vanity and shower areas – includes some type of 'art.' For the tub zone, it's the white oak slats that loosely separate it from the vanity zone behind it.

"The idea for the slats came about during the reconfiguration of the stairwell," says Garcia. "With it now located in the center of the house, the slats represent walls rooted in the ground with branches of trees growing up through them. The slats are the pulse of the house and we used them repetitiously throughout to create a rhythm, much like musical scales of a composition."

The slats are repeated as drawer fronts on the floating double vanity, which is encased in a Calacatta marble frame to further accentuate its suspension.

"Wrapping the vanity with marble makes it feel more special, liked a framed masterpiece on the wall," says Hall, noting that its lengthy dimension of nearly 16' adds to the grandness of the room.

For this large, new master bathroom, Gregory Hall and Emanuel Rodriguez Garcia opted to turn some of the conventional bathroom zones into art pieces. For the tub zone, it's the white oak slats, while the vanity area includes cabinetry encased in a Calacatta marble frame.

Photos Thomas Kouh

LED lighting beneath the vanity and behind the long mirror softly illuminates the entire space, giving it a warm, natural glow. The trio of globular Amora Lighting pendants, accented with black that matches the Samuel Heath wall-mounted plumbing fixtures, feels like puffs of clouds hovering above the countertop with integrated marble sinks. Their oversized dimensions emphasize the abundance of space.

The expansive, curbless double shower, visually on display behind frameless glass that helps define the wet area, showcases handmade Heath Ceramics tile, laid vertically to give prominence to the shower's height and openness.

"We love the handmade tiles and the human touch they represent," says Garcia. "So much of the building process is about manufacturing, and these tiles brought back a human sense and connection to the earth."

One common theme throughout the bathroom is the Calacatta marble, which clads the entire floor wall to wall and serves as the vanity top and accent in the tub area.

"The marble has a very ethereal feel, both emotionally and aesthetically," says Hall. "Its white background, when mixed with the warmth of the wood, makes it feel like you're walking on clouds."

BALANCING OLD AND NEW

Working in the Pittsburgh, PA community, Michael Jacobs is often challenged to balance old and new.

"Our housing stock is very old," says the president/owner of Marvista Design + Build in Pittsburgh. "So many homes are over 100 years old, with little additions made here and there. Flow is usually horrendous and rooms no longer reflect modern living."

Such was the case with this renovation, where Jacobs, along with designer Emily Borne, reconfigured the entire master suite to include a master bathroom with updated finishes that give a spa-like escape. The room respected the home's architecture within a new layout that better utilized the square footage and eliminated pockets of unused space where clutter and furniture often collected.

As it relates to finishes, the design team created a blend of traditional and contemporary elements.

"Our clients were really attracted to a contemporary design style," he notes. "However, we wanted to find a way to respect the traditional look of the home. Ultimately, we found a way to pepper in some contemporary details within a traditional shell that resulted in a natural, seamless look."

Photos Dave Bryce Photography

Michael Jacobs and designer Emily Borne added updated finishes that gave this master bath a spa-like aesthetic that respected this older home's architecture.

For example, custom Plain & Fancy cabinetry with its two-tone walnut/linen finishes features traditional-style mouldings accented with Cambria quartz and contemporary acrylic/matte black Schaub & Co. hardware.

"The juxtaposition of the dark wood and off-white paint looks phenomenal," he says. "Walnut is such a luxurious finish and it's making quite a comeback in the kitchen and bath industry. We combined it with matte black hardware, which is also currently trending."

Jacobs' clients also wanted to maintain a separate tub and shower. The former, a Signature Hardware freestanding unit, is set off by original, refurbished leaded glass windows. The latter, a walk-in, curbless design, includes a bench. To tie them together, Jacobs and Borne accented each with Matte Black Brizo plumbing fixtures and dark Watered Silk Italian porcelain tile. Three-dimensional tiles behind the tub are stacked, while large-format tiles in the shower are set flush and are combined with contrasting tile in a lighter colorway. A coordinating mix of mosaics accentuates the floor and niches.

"Emily did a great job of selecting several different tiles that all come together," he says.

Photo: Nadav Havakook

The large-format porcelain floor and accent wall tiles, in contrasting light and dark colorways, set the tone for this master bathroom designed by Ethan Levy, who was tasked to create a space with a modern and bold design theme.

As it relates to layout, the designers focused on creating a space in which the homeowners could move about freely.

"In all of our designs, we focus on having room to walk around," he explains. "We pay attention to aisleways and pinch points, so for this bathroom we designed towel storage next to the double vanity. We also created a make-up area in the master bedroom where she can get ready while he uses the bathroom. A separate toilet area, with a luxury automated toilet, also gives the homeowners the ability to move in, around and out of the area in a semi-private way."

MODERN AND BOLD, YET TIMELESS

To maintain the spacious feeling of this relatively roomy master bathroom, Ethan Levy chose to clad the floor and an accent wall with large-format 24"x48" porcelain tile from MSI's Oxide Collection.

"The large tiles minimize grout lines that can make a space feel smaller," says the CEO of Design Depot in Englewood, NJ.

The light and dark Blanc and Iron tiles also make a statement for the space, where Levy wanted to create a modern and bold theme that was up to date with current trends, yet remained neutral enough to stay in style for years to come.

"The color of the black vanity and the dark floor, which is almost black with some rustic texture, are very bold choices," he says. "But the lighter wall tile and the quartz vanity top bring some neutral tones back into the space."

The contrast between the floor and wall tiles is also on-trend with what the designer sees happening in many bathrooms he designs.

"Clients currently seem to be liking a contrast between dark, such as black, and light, such as white or light gray," he indicates. "They also like to add some warmth back into the room, which is important so the space doesn't feel cold. In this bathroom, we did that with the floor tile. It isn't just plain black. It has some rusty, earth tones in it that warm up the concrete-look tile. A wood finish on a vanity would be another nice way to warm up a space that has a black tile floor."

Black, in general, is also trending as selections for design elements and materials such as tile, vanities and fixtures, as illustrated in this master bathroom that showcases the nearly 8'-long, semi-custom Bellmont Cabinet Co. vanity.

"The vanity is really impressive and its length helps to stretch the feeling of the space," says Levy. "We also added a little lip around the edge of the doors that adds some detail so they aren't the standard slab-style door that is so common these days."

Additional black elements include penny round shower floor tiles and a tall, black-framed window that extends from the top of the freestanding tub to nearly the top of the 12'-tall ceiling. A matte black, contemporary-style chandelier hangs suspended in front.

"We had some extra space in the section of the bathroom with the tub so we extended the window," he says, noting its black frame matches the rest of the windows in the home. "It brings in a lot of natural light, which is important when you're using dark colors."

BOLD BLACK AND WHITE

Based on her client's request for a black and white master bathroom, Lauren Lerner obliged with a mix of the contrasting tones where light tones, represented by the freestanding tub and walls, set the stage for the stunning tile selections showcased on the floor and shower walls.

"The black and white theme led to the tile selections for the room," says the designer, founder/principal designer, Living with Lolo in Scottsdale, AZ.

The floor, Saba Tile's Savoy Snow & Ebony polycoated cement tiles, unite the two hues in a graphic pattern that runs throughout the entirety of the space, including into the shower.

"Our client loves the tile and how it adds personality to the space," she explains, adding that its pattern layout also helps to elongate the room.

16 Gauge stainless steel undermount sink

Faucet

Cutting board

Drying rack

Colander

Large Colander

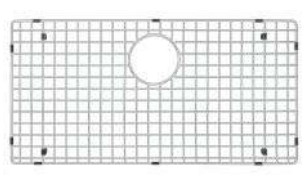

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Photo: Life Created

Based on her client's request for a black and white master bathroom, Lauren Lerner mixed the contrasting tones, where light tones, represented by the freestanding tub and walls, set the stage for the tile selections showcased on the floor and shower walls.

Photo: Dane Cronin

Cecelia Daniels, along with Kimball Modern and Skycastle Construction, deliver several special elements in this bath, including a mix of handmade tiles that sheath the shower and vanity walls and a stone soaking tub on a wooden platform that elevates its status.

In the shower, Marble Tech's Port Laurent Nero Marquina porcelain tile echoes a resemblance to its natural stone inspiration. Its large 24"x24" dimensions further the likeness.

"We wanted it to appear to be an actual marble slab," she explains. "The large tile size allowed us to achieve that look."

Dark hues are furthered with the ceiling and custom alder vanity crafted by a local cabinet maker. Lerner topped the vanity with Vadara's Calacatta Sevella quartz, which serves as a 'light' representative given its icy, glacial inspiration and predominantly 'snowy' background.

While black and white was the overriding color combination, the designer brought in a pop of color with the teal window shades.

"We wanted to bring in some additional color and texture, and since the master bedroom has a lot of teal, we pulled the color into the bathroom with the window treatments," she says.

Technology also played an important role in the renovation of this master bathroom, where the shower includes a Kohler DTV digital shower system that controls multiple shower experiences from one interface.

"This client, like many of our clients, likes to have high-tech automation in their bathroom, as well as the rest of their home," she says. "This shower system can be programmed for each user so the homeowner and his wife can have their own unique experience. When he pushes his setting, the shower automatically goes to his preferences...his water pressure, his temperature, his music, etc."

This client also loves his Kohler Veil intelligent toilet, especially the built-in wash modes and heated seat.

NATURE ON DISPLAY

Cecelia Daniels' clients have four kids and they lead very busy lives. And while they liked their home, they wanted a renovation that better matched their lifestyle and spoke to their personal tastes. As it relates to their master bathroom, the remodel also needed to aesthetically reflect the room's physical location.

"Their private bath is located at the far end of the house," relates the associate project manager/senior architectural designer at Rodwin Architecture in Boulder, CO. "It's essentially an oasis removed from the hustle and bustle, so we wanted it to feel that way...calming, bright and peaceful."

Designing an escape such as the one she created for this family is a common request for many of her clients.

"Though our clients have different priorities and styles, they seem to all have one common goal when it comes to their private baths...escape," she says.

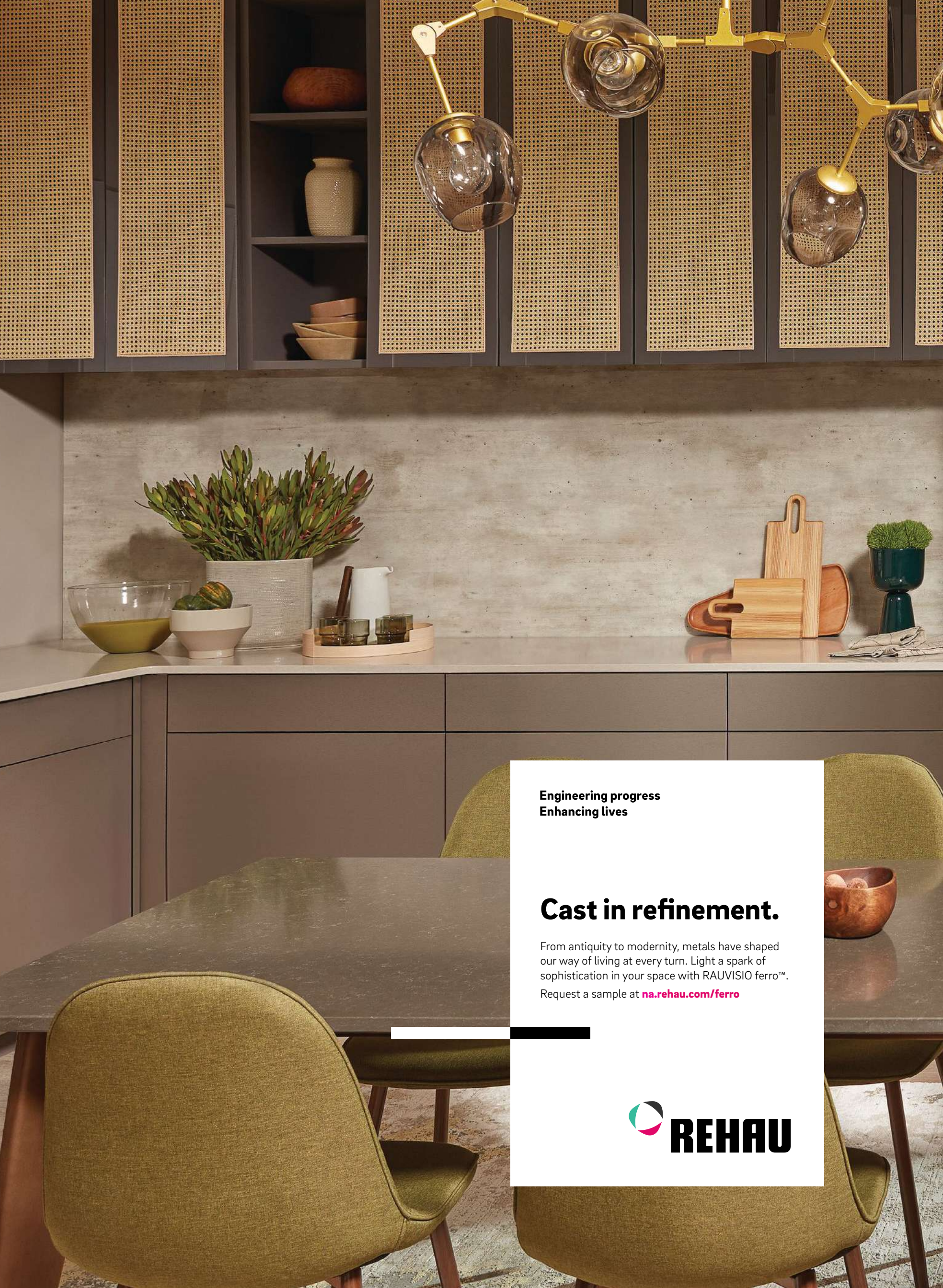
While she quips about providing all bathroom doors with sturdy locks, she does indicate that the bathroom is one place in the home where it's acceptable to be alone.

"We like to provide a pleasant space for our clients to reset and recharge so they can cultivate the right mindsets to tackle their busy days," she says.

With those goals in mind, she – along with interior designer Kate Van Sluyter from Kimball Modern, general contractor Brandon David at Skycastle Construction and principal Scott Rodwin, AIA – included several special elements, such as the mix of handmade Ann Sacks tiles used throughout the space. For example, MADE Modern Moon Cotton tiles sheath the shower wall while a combination of Peak and Valley tiles in the New Lagoon colorway highlight the vanity wall.

"These materials, along with the hand craftsmanship of the floating [walnut] vanity [by The Artisan Shop] and matching open shelving unit, provide a very natural, earthy feel that balance the room's straight, crisp lines, such as those of the glass shower enclosure," she explains. "They put nature on display."

Daniels further flaunted nature by situating the MTI Baths' stone soaking tub on a wooden platform that elevates its status.



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REHAU

This luxury oases by Rodney Palmer and Glynis Wood includes a Vichy shower with six custom-positioned showerheads that release a calming flush of water onto a leathered granite floating bench, a double-steam shower with a 48" rainhead showerhead and his/her handheld showerheads and body sprays, and a wooden focal-point tub.

Photos: Cate Black Photography

"It seemingly transports you to another time and place where you can imagine soaking outside…somewhere remote that is surrounded by nature," she explains, adding that the Hubbardton Forge Cairn pendant light suspended near the tub enhances the feeling with its mesmerizing stacked 'stones'. "The soothing colors – the rich wood, matte whites and warm greens and blues – evoke a spa-like quality. These, combined with organic textures such as natural wood grains, imperfect circles and metamorphic movement in the floor tiles that carry up the tub wall, add to the elemental feel of the space."

NEXT-LEVEL SPA RETREAT

While the goal of creating a spa-like retreat for a master bathroom isn't necessarily an unusual request these days, Rodney Palmer and Glynis Wood collaborated to ensure that this new-construction space showcased a variety of luxurious products and finishes that provided next-level experiences with distinctive his/her oases, a walk-in closet and even a balcony where their clients can enjoy their morning cup of coffee.

"Everything about this house is unique," says Palmer, AIA/principal partner, Cornerstone Architects in Austin, TX.

"The homeowners gave us a lot of free rein so we were able to select unusual products, materials and finishes," adds Wood, ASID member, Glynis Wood Interiors, also in Austin.

For starters, they included a Vichy shower. Typically seen only in commercial settings, the table shower heightens in-home spa services with its six showerheads – custom positioned to the proportions of their clients' bodies – that release a calming and cleansing flush of water onto a leathered Black Granite floating bench. To further enhance the ambiance, they clad the room with a variety of Ann Sacks wall and floor tile, including dimensional tile as an accent.

"The Vichy shower is very cave-like," remarks Palmer. "We wanted to create a lot of warmth, depth and intimacy, which we achieved with the tile."

The Vichy shower is accessed via the double steam shower, which includes its own well-appointed amenities, such as a 48" rainhead showerhead and his/her handheld showerheads and body sprays. Also clad in several selections of Ann Sacks tile, Palmer actually reconfigured it after Wood specified the tile.

"We wanted to maximize the tile dimensions," he explains, in reference to the rectangular and hexagonal tiles. "We didn't want to have any slivers or irregular pieces so we redesigned the spacing and columns based on the tile."

To each side of the shower, Palmer and Wood designed his/her oases. His side includes a vanity and toilet room while hers has an added feature of a Bath in Wood of Maine focal-point walnut tub.

"That tub was the first thing I bought for the whole bathroom," says Wood. "It's my favorite feature because it's so unexpected."

To highlight the tub, the team included an accent wall in Ann Sacks' Context Pillowed Mosaic Metallic Black.

"A lot of materials within the space are neutral…except for this wall," says Palmer. "It's a major accent for the room. We chose the dark shade so the tub 'pops' against it. Plus, the dark color helps tone down the light that flows in from the windows."

The floating gray vanity, topped with a glass countertop and accented with LED lights below, echoes the darker shades within the Grigio Perla floor tile.

"The floor is a really unusual gray marble," Wood describes, noting that it also sheaths his side of the bathroom as well as the walk-in closet. "I fell in love with its color." ■

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Riding the High-Tech Wave

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a sharp rise in a reliance by kitchen/bath design pros on an ever-expanding palette of new technology, a *KBDN* survey reveals.

BY ELIOT SEFRIN, *KBDN* PUBLISHER EMERITUS

The use of cutting-edge technology for project design, client relations, management and marketing has become far more prevalent throughout the kitchen and bath design community since the onset of COVID-19 and its resultant impact on showroom protocols, client access and other business operations.

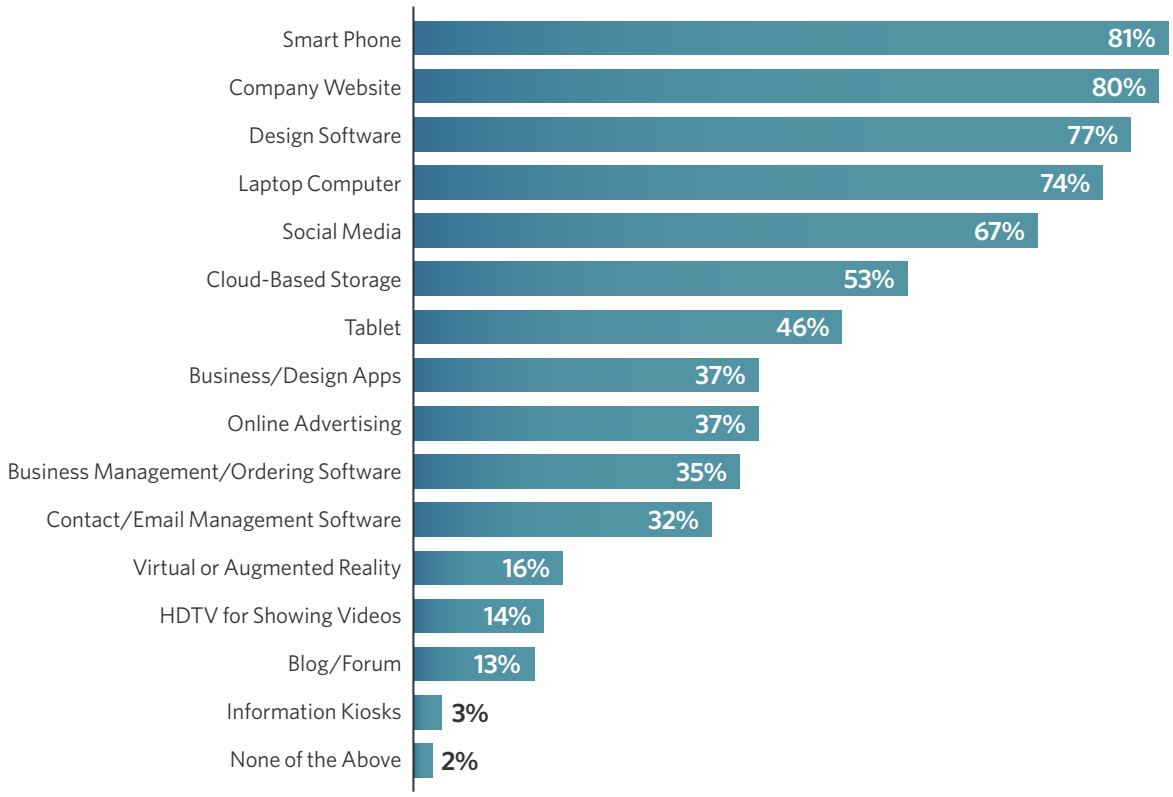
Tied to this overarching trend, kitchen and bath design professionals are apparently utilizing – and spending more on – an ever-broadening array of technological tools, as companies attempt to upgrade websites, conduct online meetings, enhance digital presentations, offer virtual showroom tours, provide internet purchasing options and implement virtual and/or augmented reality. At the same time, dealers and designers report they are facing a handful of challenges in implementing the seemingly unending flood of high-tech tools becoming available (**see related story, Page 54**).

Those are among the key findings of a nationwide survey conducted on behalf of *Kitchen & Bath Design News* by its exclusive research partner, the Research Institute for Cooking and Kitchen Intelligence (RICKI). The online survey, conducted in July, involved a representative sampling of kitchen/bath dealers and designers, including those at firms that maintain a showroom as well as those who operate independently.

According to the survey's findings, eight in 10 dealers and designers polled currently use both a smart phone and a company website as the primary technology tools for their businesses. Design software, laptops, social media and Cloud-based storage are utilized by more than half the survey respondents. Other commonly used technology tools include

On average, surveyed designers and dealers report that they currently spend about 8% of their annual expense budget on various forms of technology.

1. Most Common Technology Tools Utilized By Kitchen/Bath Dealers & Designers



Source: Kitchen & Bath Design News/RICKI

business/design apps, online advertising, business management/ordering software and contact/email management software (**see Figure 1**).

The *KBDN* survey also revealed that recipients' top three technology-related activities revolve around conducting online meetings with clients and/or subcontractors, enhancing online communication to present designs or proposals, and using virtual and/or augmented reality to demonstrate design possibilities to clients. Moreover, a vast majority (between 59%-73%) of those surveyed say they are doing more of those things compared to pre-COVID – particularly when it comes to handling project drawings or designs – while a significant number say they anticipate adding those, along with other, technological capabilities in the future (**see Figure 2**).

On average, surveyed designers and dealers report that they currently spend about 8% of their annual expense budget on various forms of technology, with 38% reporting that they are now spending more than they were prior to the global pandemic, and 56% saying they're spending about the same. In contrast, only about 6% say they're spending either "somewhat" or "much" less than prior to COVID-19 (**see Figure 3**).

Designers and dealers also told *KBDN* that the primary benefit they accrue from technology is to assist clients in visualizing their kitchen and bath projects, followed by the ability to achieve greater efficiency and the ability to more effectively communicate. Others say it saves time and allows them to work more effectively with remote clients (**see Figure 4**).

More than half of the surveyed design pros say they are now using LinkedIn ads, text/mobile ads and blogs/forums more than they were a year ago, though all of those tools are used relatively infrequently.

MARKETING & OTHER ACTIVITIES

When it comes to utilizing technology tools to market their business, surveyed designers and dealers said they primarily utilize their company's website (82%), along with social media posts (53%). More than half of the surveyed design pros say they are now using LinkedIn ads, text/mobile ads and blogs/forums more than they were a year ago, though all of those tools are used relatively infrequently.

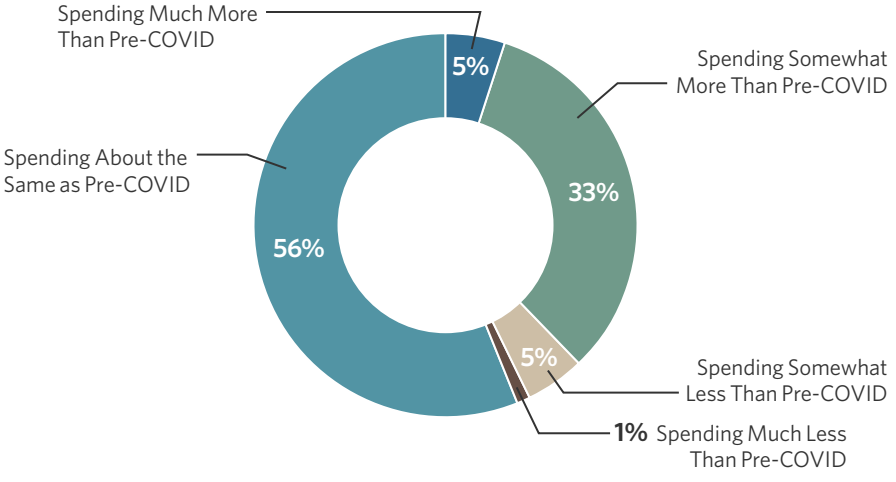
Almost half of the surveyed designers and dealers say they plan to make updates or enhancements to their websites in the short-term future, with one in three updating their website at least quarterly.

Just over half of the designers and dealers surveyed by *KBDN* say they are heavily involved in digital marketing. On the flip side, one in six report that they don't use digital marketing at all. The primary barriers for integrating digital tools into their marketing activities are a sentiment that their business is performing well enough without it (49%) and the perceived time that it takes to implement (33%).

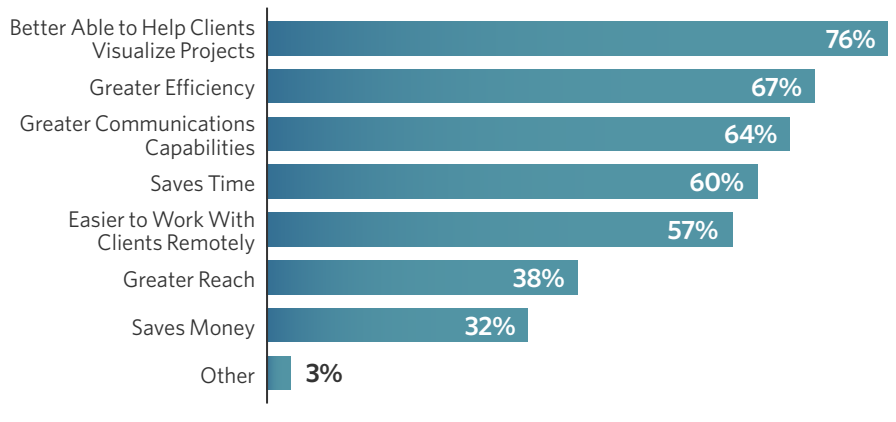
2. Top Technology-Related Activities Conducted by Dealers & Designers

	Currently Doing	Doing More Now	Plan to Do
Conducting Additional Online Meetings w/Clients, Subs	53%	71%	15%
Enhanced Online Communication to Present Designs, Etc.	45%	69%	26%
Using Virtual or Augmented Realities to Present Ideas	39%	60%	21%
Implemented Updates/Enhancements to Company Website	34%	63%	45%
Added Platforms to Allow for Online Purchasing	17%	73%	14%
Scheduling Virtual Showroom Tours	15%	70%	12%
Added Virtual Showroom Tours to Website	14%	59%	18%
Added Virtual Marketing Programs (e.g. Cooking Demos.)	12%	67%	29%

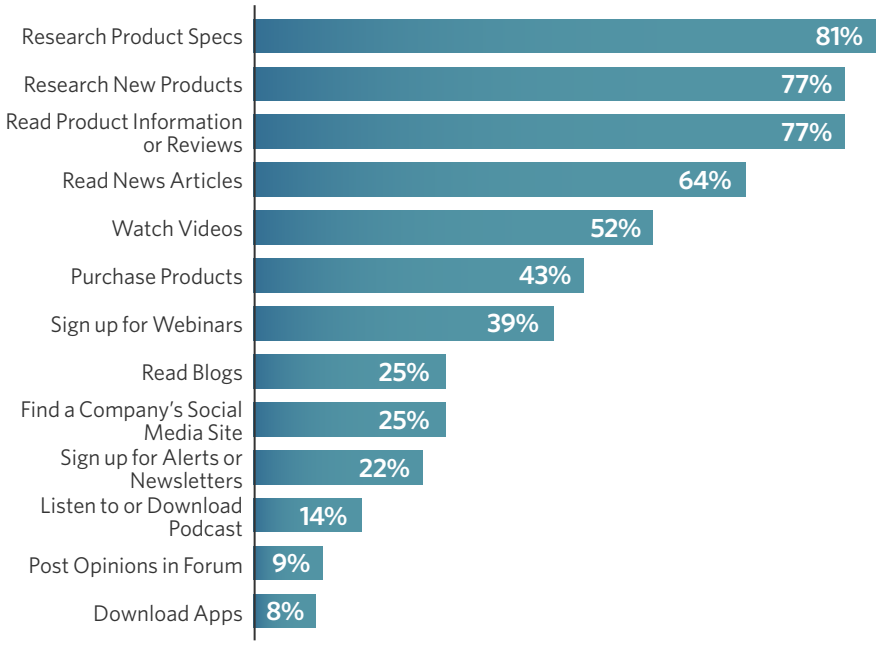
3. Current Dealer/Designer Spending for Technology



4. Perceived Main Benefits of Utilizing Technology



5. Top Activities Conducted When Visiting Kitchen & Bath Websites



Among other key survey findings:

- Design professionals generally believe that technology is of far higher importance to clients in terms of the business services that dealers and designers can provide compared to having technology incorporated into the kitchen and bath products that are used in their projects. Surveyed design pros feel that, on average, only about a quarter of their clients show interest in kitchen and bath products utilizing new types of technology such as automation and connectivity. If a client does express interest in product technology, surveyed designers and dealers say those clients most likely request built-in charging stations (75%), new lighting applications (55%) and connected appliances (44%).

- About seven in 10 designers and dealers say they are visiting kitchen or bath industry-related websites more than once a week, with more than two in five visiting those websites daily or several times a week. The top activities performed when visiting websites are accessing product specs, researching new products, accessing product information or reviews and reading news articles (**see Figure 5**).

- Surveyed designers and dealers use an average of three mobile apps for business purposes, and almost a third of those polled say they are currently using apps for business more compared to a year ago, prior to COVID. The apps used most are Facebook (21% of those surveyed), Instagram (15%), Houzz (13%) and Zoom (10%). ■

Learning Curve, Cost Seen Among Key Technology Challenges

CHICAGO, IL — The steepest challenges facing kitchen and bath design firms when it comes to implementing technology are the learning curve required to successfully implement the programs and the cost involved in purchasing the products and hiring the technical assistance required to maintain the programs, surveyed dealers and designers report.

A significant number of survey respondents also tell *Kitchen & Bath Design News* that today's technological tools often require them "to be on" 24 hours a day, seven days a week, while advancements in the programs are often difficult to keep up with. Still others report that technology could assist them more effectively if it was more user friendly and intuitive (**see Figure 6**).

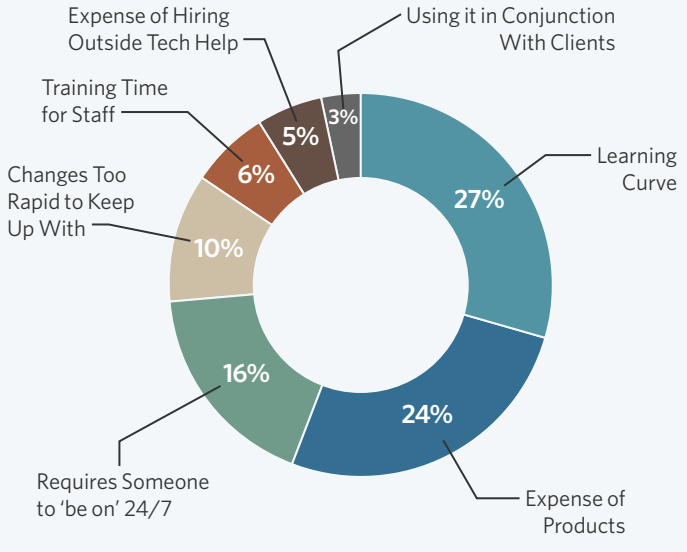
"It would be far better if I could have the latest software running on the latest hardware," one dealer told *KBDN*.

"If programs were created with a 'designer' in mind instead of a 'techie,' (or) if there was someone who understood my business enough to show me how to apply the technology to the problem (it wouldn't be so challenging)," another design pro observed.

What follows are other comments offered by dealers and designers regarding how technology could be more helpful to their business:

- "If it didn't require so many passwords. I know this is not practical, so some days I spend a lot of time changing my password because the one I already have assigned doesn't work. It's a waste of my time."
- "If it was more intuitive ... written in English instead of 'Geek.'"
- "If I had more access to manufacturers with technology similar to mine, or that plugs in with mine."
- "If it was not so complicated to learn."
- "If it wasn't so expensive to purchase, upgrade, maintain and insure against ransomware attacks."
- "If it was more powerful, quicker and a lot more stable."

6. Greatest Challenges Being Experienced With Technology



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Healthy Innovation

Appliance trends focus on health, individual expression and products that enhance and simplify work in the kitchen.

BY ELIZABETH RICHARDS

BlueStar has extended its refrigeration line to include Integrated Column refrigerators and freezers that can be used independently or paired side by side. Available in stainless steel, more than 1,000 colors or custom colors, the 30" refrigerator includes advanced temperature control.
bluestarcooking.com

Manufacturing range hoods for the kitchen for 88 years, **Vent-A-Hood** delivers a range of ventilation styles for today's kitchen designs. The company's range hoods incorporate Vent-A-Hood's exclusive patented centrifugal grease extraction system, which keeps the air clear of smoke and grease.
ventahood.com

The Presrv Full Size Single Zone Beverage Cooler from **Zephyr** features full-extension black wood racks, adjustable glass shelves and a stainless steel, full-extension rollout bin. The dual-pane, argon-filled glass includes Low-e coating that helps minimize UV light penetration.
zephyronline.com

Big Chill's 2021 Fall Edit features a curated palette of custom colors designed in collaboration with president and lead designer of MA Allen Interiors, MA Allen. The colors include Carmine Red, Moss Green, Signal Blue and Grey White and are offered on the company's Classic, PRO and Retro lines.
bigchill.com

A year and a half into the pandemic, manufacturers have seen many impacts on the appliance industry, resulting in multiple changes and rising trends. "One of the most significant trends I see currently, and expect in the near future, is the focus on holistic health and wellness – not only for individuals and families but for our planet," stresses Zach Elkin, president at Beko Home Appliances USA, based in Chicago, IL. "The COVID-19 pandemic has forced consumers and manufacturers to look differently at how the product and programs allow for better health, nutrition and sustainability."

"Innovation and increased technology continue to be trends in the kitchen space," offers Paula Smith, director of marketing, designer & builder at Fisher & Paykel in Costa Mesa, CA. "With buyers spending more time than ever in their kitchens over the last year, there has been greater demand for appliances that are smart, easy to use and offer perfect results. Users have learned more about appliances and frankly about cooking at home. We are seeing an uptick in interest around steam cooking due to the nutritional and overall health benefits, as well as higher interest in our refrigerators that integrate food preservation technology."

"In the past year trends have changed significantly, mostly due to the pandemic and the lockdown," says India Hynes, CEO at Henderson, NV-based Vinotemp. "More people are home, [which] means more people are cooking and using their appliances. People are purchasing things with extra storage space, reorganizing their spaces to fit more, buying new appliances and compatible appliances like air fryers," she says.

Aesthetic trends have been less affected by the pandemic, say some manufacturers. "The pandemic has had a definite impact on the industry overall, but not so much on the aesthetic side of things," observes Christian Boscherini, marketing manager at SMEG USA, based in New York, NY. "The increased interest in upgrades and remodels driven by people spending more time at home has continued from last year. But now, it is alongside an increased need for affordability in appliances, cabinetry, fixtures and lighting, as material shortages drive overall costs up. In short, people want to do more with their kitchens than ever, but at a time when many cannot afford to do it all at once."

In addition to a focus on health and wellness, top trends in major appliances include individualizing appliances both functionally and visually, demand for appliances that simplify the work in the kitchen, and connectivity. So say manufacturers recently surveyed by *Kitchen & Bath Design News*.

HEALTH IS TOP PRIORITY

Products that promote a healthy lifestyle have been on the rise for several years, a trend that continues to thrive. "Health, wellness and hygiene have become must-haves in the kitchen and home – now more than ever," stresses Elkin. "A large population of individuals and families want to

Thermador's Freedom Refrigeration Collection includes refrigerators with storage solutions such as delicate produce bins. The units feature all-stainless steel interior, TFT display control panel, Cool Air Flow technology and WiFi connectivity using the Thermador Connected Experience by Home Connect.
thermador.com

Forza brings its uniquely shaped window with sculpted lines to the new Double/Single Wall Ovens and Warming Drawer. Each cavity features a 4.4-cu.-ft. capacity with two chromed racks and six rack levels. The ovens feature pyrolytic self-cleaning with an automatic door latch.
forzacucina.com

Elmira Stove Works delivers bold lines and a pop of color with its NorthStar appliances. Available in nine vintage-inspired colors and unlimited custom colors, the appliances also sport distinctive chrome accents. The refrigerator is shown in Paprika, part of the Spice It Up custom collection.
elmirastoveworks.com

Featuring AutoDos with PowerDisk, the G7000 Dishwashers automatically dispense the correct amount of detergent based on the selected program and degree of soiling, notes **Miele**. The dishwashers also include AutoStart, which allows users to start, stop and monitor the unit from a smart device.
mieleusa.com

The Light kitchen island hood by **Falmec** is enclosed in the upper part by two smoked glass panels and two black satin aluminum profiles that integrate with the LED strips. Ultra-compact, the suction body includes Multi-Air technology, which divides the suction into multiple ultra-compact motors.
falmecnorthamerica.com

Wine refrigeration from **Signature Kitchen Suites** minimizes temperature fluctuations, reduces vibration, limits light and locks in humidity, notes the firm. The all-metal interior keeps wine cool, while dark-tinted, triple-pane glass protects from UV light. The smart refrigeration can be controlled via app.
signaturekitchensuite.com

Summit Appliance's newest undercounter refrigerator is a shallow-depth version at 24"-wide and 17-¼" deep. The refrigerator includes adjustable shelves and door storage, while the slide-out storage features shelves to hold bottles, peg hooks for utensils and a slotted ceiling for wine glasses.
summitappliance.com

Beko's 36" French Three-Door Refrigerator features EverFresh+ and Active Fresh Blue Light, a new crisper made from breathable smart materials that maximize humidity and moisture loss, notes the firm. The unit also features a planet-friendly r600a refrigerant and a noise level as low as 39dBA.
beko.com

ensure they are safe, eating well and sustaining a healthy lifestyle, which is possible with breakthrough technologies," he said. "Appliances with the latest, state-of-the-art food preservation technology, sanitation cleaning and allergen removal are just a few examples of advances that Beko already has in its appliances, or we are currently working on.

"The pandemic has strengthened the push towards consumers wanting to lead healthier lives, transforming wellness into the new luxury," adds Jeff Sweet, corporate product manager for Sub-Zero, Wolf and Cove in Madison, WI. "We found that consumers are focusing more on eating fresh foods, which has also led them to care more about food preservation and minimizing food waste," he says. "This health consciousness also extends to how food is prepared, with steam ovens and steam cooking rising in popularity."

Michael Rockstroh, North American Market Leader for Italy-based Bertazzoni, says that food and beverage preservation is a category that will continue to grow. A dramatic increase in the purchase of organic food drives consumers to seek out products that help them store that food properly. "That changes kitchen design as a whole because more space is dedicated to refrigeration, if possible, plus the technologies are more and more refined," Rockstroh says.

"The trend that Miele is seeing during this time is the need for a dishwasher that can take the endless needs to clean and sanitize," says Kevin Pchola, spokesperson for Miele in Princeton, NJ. "Also, because we are working from home more and we run the dishwasher during the day, customers want a silent machine."

"Our customers continue to look for appliances that support their healthy lifestyle goals, yet are intuitive and beautiful," concurs Smith. "Another area of interest that has presented itself this year is in ventilation hoods, as people have become more familiar with the significance of clean air – both in their homes and office spaces."

LIFESTYLE DRIVEN

Consumers have long desired ways to make their kitchens compatible with their lifestyles, a trend that has grown tremendously with more time spent at home. In spring 2021, JennAir surveyed 500 designers and architects from across the country, says Chelsey Whitehead, product and brand marketing director for JennAir in Benton Harbor, MI. "It's clear consumers are more passionate than ever about customizing a kitchen that reflects their personalities and breaks through the monotony of basic materials and finishes. In the last year, they have had a lot of time to experience their homes and identify the changes they want to make," she remarks. Eighty-nine percent of those surveyed say customizing a kitchen design plan has become more important to clients over the past 1–2 years, and 90% say their clients are more focused on designing a space that reflects their own personality than the resale value of the design, she adds.

The Monolith French Door Bottom Freezer adds a sophisticated refrigerator/freezer combination to the Monolith collection from **Liebherr**. The 36" model is available fully integrated with a panel-ready option or stainless steel door panels, and the gasket system ensures that each door closes fully.
liebherr.com

Ideal for compact kitchens, **THOR Kitchen's** 24" Electric Range features a frameless glass top that is flush with the countertops that includes four heating elements. The true convection oven delivers multiple cooking modes such as bake, convection bake, broil and convection broil.
thorkitchen.com

True Residential has added Juniper, a serene deep blue/gray hue to its Build Your True program of custom finishes and hardware. The color serves as both a neutral and bold color choice for today's kitchens, notes the firm, and can be customized through the addition of custom hardware finishes.
true-residential.com

Marvel has unveiled its latest collection of professional and designer undercounter refrigeration products. Now with over 100 new models and a wider variety of price points, the new line-up features expanded finish options and reversible doors. The majority of models in the line are Energy Star certified.
marvelrefrigeration.com

Perlick's Nitro Dispensing Kits are designed to connect to an existing dispensing tower for nitrogen-infused beverages. The kits are available in both a single and dual option, for dispensing one or two beverages, and overall allows for up to four beverages to be dispensed from the same tower.
perlick.com

Bertazzoni's Built-in Food & Beverage Preservation Columns includes Built-in Refrigerator Columns in 36", 30", 24" and 18" sizes with stainless steel panel or panel-ready options. Stainless steel crispers and an all metal interior are featured, as well as a Universal User Interface and lateral air cooling.
us.bertazzoni.com

The Portofino line includes a full-size, freestanding refrigerator that features clean lines. The 27" refrigerator from **SMEG** is available in eight colors, and features an 18-cu.ft. cabin with dual LED light bands running down the side panels, three-drawer freezer and IDouble-zone temperature control.
smegusa.com

The **Samsung** Bespoke 4-Door Flex offers a range of colors and finishes and storage features. The Bespoke model comes with customizable, interchangeable panels in eight colors, a new Beverage Center including auto-fill water pitcher and FlexZone for temperature-controlled compartments.
samsung.com

Rockstroh notes there has been a gradual paradigm shift in the way people build spaces at home. Rather than designing the space for resale value, people are looking at the space in terms of how they can live in it, and how well it works with their individual lifestyle, he reports. No longer are people flocking to the "heroic new feature you had to have," he says. Instead, they are paying attention to what they need to enhance their unique lifestyle. "The technology should adapt to your lifestyle; you shouldn't adapt your lifestyle to the technology," he explains.

"At Sub-Zero, Wolf and Cove, we know that the kitchen is an integral part of our consumers' homes – and that extends to their appliances. After a year spent indoors assessing the state of our kitchens, we've noticed a shift towards appliances that offer customization and functionality," Sweet reports.

"Customization is key – from pops of color to paneling options," he adds. "Built-in and integrated appliances are becoming increasingly common, especially as consumers are seeking more decorative options. This ranges from refrigerator paneling that blends in seamlessly with the cabinetry to statement pieces that help express the homeowner's style. We're also seeing consumers opting for professional-style appliances that serve as a focal point in the kitchen while offering greater power and performance," he adds.

"Customization in appliances is something we're starting to see," concurs Elkin. "A room in the home is often a reflection of the homeowner. In the kitchen, small appliances offer a range of colors, so of course, they may purchase a mixer or toaster in their favorite color – it's a representation of them. Larger appliances like refrigerators are starting to see color customization, as well."

Rockstroh reports that accessory kits to change out the knobs and handles on a standard product are also in high demand. Bertazzoni launched this option two years ago, he says, and adoption has far exceeded their expectations, with 60% of customers choosing an accessory kit to individualize the look of their product when available. "Personalization is a trend that's going to stay with us," Rockstroh stresses. The company's color unit sales are outpacing growth of stainless steel units two to one, though stainless steel is still relevant, he adds.

"The staple stainless steel will always fit in any kitchen look," remarks Pchola. "But having the ability to add a pop of color or blend in with the white, black and gray kitchens is always something customers are asking for. In our built-in ovens, Miele offers our Clean Touch Stainless Steel, which is a blend of black glass and steel; an all-white glass; an all-black glass, and an all-graphite gray glass. And the ability to stake or place appliances side-by-side is a great look and the lines match up seamlessly, providing a nice clean look."

"People are going more towards the timeless features," Hynes explains. "They are purchasing more things that are stainless steel and glass. Vibrant colors, odd finishes and black stainless have become a thing of the past. The black stainless was not unified with different appliances, which made it an issue when trying to match specific appliances."

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- Star® Burners with ExtraLow®
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- Extra Large Oven Capacity
- WiFi-Enabled with Home Connect™

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Photo: Chris Rollett Photography

Fulgor Milano's Sofia Professional Range Color Kits offer a flexible design solution. Shown in this design by Cabin Fever Interiors, Sofia ranges come with a standard stainless steel finish, however homeowners have the option to personalize them with interchangeable door kits available in six matte and glossy colors.
fulgor-milano.com

Monogram's redesigned professional range, part of the Statement Collection, features brass accents for a luxe look.The TrueTemp Gas Burner can be set to maintain an exact temperature and hold it. Also featured are multi-ring configurations and brass burners for high-heat durability and precision oven modes including hot air fry.
monogram.com

Dacor's 36″ Counter Depth French Door Refrigerator with Dual Reveal Door fits seamlessly with kitchen cabinets. The Dual Reveal doors and Triple Cooling System keeps food fresh, while FlexZone allows temperature customization of the lower-right storage space. The IQ Control with SmartThings integration allows remote monitoring.
dacor.com

U-Chill from **U-Line Corporation** is designed to maintain the temperature of beverages while they are being enjoyed. The In-Counter Cooling Cylinder works for wine, champagne, craft beer, carafes, bottled water, juice, soda and spirits. An individualized mood can be set via the 27 different color options that light the bottle.
u-line.com

The space-saving design of the 1.1-cu.-ft. Built-in Low Profile Microwave from **KitchenAid** allows for preparation of dishes while freeing up more room in the kitchen. It installs within a 17-1.8" tall cabinet cutout with the included Standard Trim Kit. Sensor Cooking Functions provide presets for cooking modes including soften, melt and defrost.
kitchenaid.com

Ranging in sizes from 12" to 36", appliances in **Verona's** Designer Cooktop Collection include a stainless steel surface, continuous cast iron grates, high-power triple-ring brass burners and soft-touch rubberized round knobs. Made in Italy, the cooktops include sealed burners ranging from low/simmer 4,000 BTU to high/boil 18,000 BTU.
veronaappliances.com

PITT Cooking offers front knobs to operate its independent gas burners, which are integrated into the countertop. Available for any PITT Cooking design, the front burners mount to a metal piece that wraps around the edge of the countertop and continues downward on the front of the countertop, with all technical parts hidden below the countertop.
pittcooking.com

The 400 Series Combi-Steam Oven from **Gaggenau**, available in 24" and 30" widths, features five humidity levels and temperatures up to 450 degrees Fahrenheit. Home Connect provides ease of use from a smart device. The oven delivers precise slow cooking, sous vide, high-temperature broiling behind glass and two baking levels.
gaggenau.com

"We have seen a mild increase in interest in colors once again, after a heavy resurgence of the dominance of neutral tones over the past few years," Boscherini remarks. "Ventilation is being increasingly treated as a 'statement' by consumers, leading to more styling on vent hoods. There's also a general trend towards increased customizability, darker cabinetry colors and mixed materials."

Scott Kim, director of product marketing at Dacor in City of Industry, CA, says more color and customization options are available, which creates new design concepts and implementation options. "For luxury appliances, the implementation of cutting-edge design and material options is opening up new avenues of kitchen design," he notes. The ability for luxury appliances to integrate seamlessly in order to create beautiful and usable kitchens has also been impactful, he adds.

Modern styles are increasingly in demand, manufacturers say. According to their survey, Whitehead says, "In the kitchen specifically, 51% of architects and designers believe sleek and modern appliances are the most common growing trend this year."

QUALITY AND SIMPLICITY

Multifunctional appliances, along with undercounter products, help eliminate cluttered countertops and provide the ample storage consumers require. Technology that makes tasks easier and helps consumers use their kitchen fully are in high demand, from connected appliances to streamlined ways of cooking.

"People are looking for appliances that will make their lives easier and dynamic, given the situation of the increased amount of time we spend at home," says Kim. "This includes features in the area of convenience and entertaining, like our refrigerators with cocktail ice, etc. along with connectivity feature sets that enable greater interaction."

"Consumers want appliances that last long and deliver on quality and performance. They also want appliances that can help simplify their life," adds Sweet. "Consumers are also seeking sustainable and energy-efficient appliances, such as products that incorporate induction technology. Induction is gaining popularity, since it uses electromagnetic energy to heat cookware directly, resulting in more efficient heat transfer to food, as opposed to gas or electric appliances that heat indirectly. This not only reduces emissions but keeps the cooking surface cooler to the touch. Induction also offers more responsiveness for greater control and is easier to clean."

Rockstroh agrees that induction is gaining ground. "It's not new, but it's had a Sleeping Beauty phase for 40 years and now it's coming alive," he says. Sales of induction have doubled each year for the past three years, he notes, and induction is far more affordable than it used to be. It's easier to use than it used to be as well, he adds, and consumer resistance to the need for new cookware has diminished. In some areas, building codes

With its flush appearance and adjustable depth, the HBN1 Built-In Insert Series from **Broan** tucks neatly inside kitchen cabinets. Infrared sensing gives the hood the ability to automatically adjust the fan speed based on heat being produced. The hood also includes LED lighting, a 4-speed soft-touch control, WiFi connectivity and voice control.
broan-nutone.com

The **Wolf** Induction Range showcases clean lines and an integrated touch-control panel on top. It utilizes Wolf's Dual VertiCross convection system to provide even heat as well as induction technology for consistent, precise control. The range is WiFi enabled for connection from any smart device.
subzero-wolf.com

Viking Range has introduced the Delta Hues, a Contemporary Color Collection – a palette of 14 colors that is inspired by global influences of the Mississippi Delta, the home of Viking. Developed in partnership with Sherwin-Williams, every Delta Hues color includes a Sherwin-Williams Designer Room Color Complementary Palette.
vikingrange.com

Vinotemp has added two microwave ovens to its Brama by Vinotemp appliance line. Available in over-the-range and built-in/countertop options, the microwaves include a smart Sensor Cook function that detects humidity released by the items cooked and automatically adjusts the optimal cooking time. The units offer 10 different power settings.
vinotemp.com

The **Sub-Zero** Designer Series Undercounter Refrigeration collection features units that are fully customizable with panel-ready doors. WiFi-enabled features allow control from any mobile device. The line includes wine refrigeration, beverage centers, ice makers, undercounter drawers and more.
subzero-wolf.com

Sharp Home Electronics Company of America now offers a built-in Smart Convection Microwave Drawer Oven that combines sensor microwave cooking with dual convection fans for turntable-free baking, roasting, grilling and air frying. The WiFi-enabled, Smart microwave drawer oven also includes Easy Wave Open.
sharpusa.com

Fisher & Paykel's 2021 Combination Steam Oven delivers a large, 3 cubic feet of space, an integrated water tank and a TFT touchscreen interface for ease of use. The oven, which does not need to be plumbed, includes 22 steam and oven functions, including nine new such as Steam Proof and Steam Defrost.
fisherpaykel.com

Equipped with FlexInduction, **Bosch** induction cooktops provide flexible features that simplify the cooking process. With FlexInduction, users can cook with various pot and pan sizes at once, all at different temperatures by combining two cooking zones into one larger zone. The cooktops also include Home Connect.
bosch-home.com

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don't allow for the installation of gas home appliances any longer, which also has helped demand for induction grow, he notes

A desire for a less cluttered look also impacts appliance trends. "The current trend in major kitchen appliances is to reduce or eliminate the need for countless small countertop appliances and accessories," Pchola says. "While the trend[s] in appliances might not have significantly changed in the past year, awareness of how to use your appliances to their peak performance has."

Rockstroh believes designers are driving the trend to declutter the space and calm down "visual noise" in the kitchen. Lines are more refined, he notes, and undercounter technologies are prevalent, including many drawer applications. Even appliances – such as microwaves – that used to sit on the counter, now are available in undercounter applications, he says.

"What we are noticing now is that storage is very important," replies Hynes. "Not only are people buying bigger refrigerators, freezers and wine storage, but they are also buying extra storage for the garage and other areas. Many people are purchasing refrigerators with designated wine and beverage storage so that there is more room for food."

STAYING CONNECTED

Connected appliances are also on the rise, many manufacturers say. "Every year, interest in 'smart' appliances increases," stresses Boscherini.

"As we all know, many consumers are living in connected homes and rely on their smart-home devices to make their experiences in the home more enjoyable and more efficient," Whitehead notes. "The same goes for their experiences in the kitchen. That's why you find smart-home technology integrated into JennAir brand's suite of appliances. The digital platform allows you to control appliances remotely and access personalized insights to enhance your cooking experiences."

"Technology in the kitchen continues to be a focus," Smith points out. "Touch panel interfaces are popular across appliances," she says, noting that the National Kitchen & Bath Association also called this out as a 2021 trend.

"Not surprisingly, there is a greater integration of technology in the cooking space and a higher demand for connected appliances. Consumers are taking advantage of the features and conveniences their appliances can provide, and more and more companies are incorporating smart technology into their appliances," Sweet stresses. "Ultimately, consumers are looking for more ways that their home appliances can help simplify their lives while meeting their aesthetics."

"WiFi is available on most appliances nowadays, and the way we have digitized appliances has changed the game. You can control music, grocery lists and even temperatures when it comes to WiFi and appliances," says Hynes.

Even with increased connectivity, ease of use is still important. "As more digital screens are incorporated into all brands, customers want it to be intuitive," adds Pchola. ■

Storage & Sparkle

CREATING A TRULY sustainable, timeless space means creating a space that will not only look good, but function for clients for years to come. In the kitchen in particular – but also, it can be argued, in the bath – this starts with cabinetry and storage solutions.

As far as function goes, there is a wide variety of creative solutions available on the market currently that can be combined to create a space that is customized to each member of the client's family's needs – from blind corner pullouts to maximize available storage to protective liners to keep cabinetry looking beautiful for years. In terms of decorative options, there are plenty of unique elements available to make a space truly sparkle, including metal grating for cabinet door infill and jewelry-like end caps for cabinetry and islands.

On this and the following pages, *KBDN* explores just a few of the products currently available to create truly individualized spaces. ■

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1. Rev-A-Shelf's 448KB Series Base Cabinet Pullout with Knife Block and Utensil Bin is available for 9" full-height face frame base cabinets. It features natural maple construction with a semi-gloss finish, chrome accents and comes with a 1.25 qt., removable stainless-steel bin, single knife block with flex rod technology and a set of flexible, easy-to-clean cutting mats.
rev-a-shelf.com

2. Hardware Resources has added the Blind Corner Pullout to its Storage with Style line. The pullout features a 1" clearance to avoid interference with adjacent cabinet hardware, allowing for greater design flexibility. It can be installed in either left- or right-hand blind corners and features four adjustable-height baskets.
hardwareresources.com

3. Designed in a compact size with a corded electrical connection, **Docking Drawer** Blade Series outlets are designed to be simple to install into drawers of any type using basic tools, says the company. A patented interlocking safety feature cuts power to the outlet when surrounding temps exceed 120° F, making them safe for vanity drawer applications, and the cable management arms protect the power cord.
dockingdrawer.com

4. Compatible with the company's MOVENTO and TANDEM full-extension slides, **Blum's** Pull-Out Shelf Lock ensures a secure hold when open to maximize storage space. The lock can easily be released with one hand.
blum.com

5. Bringing over 50 years of experience in cabinet door manufacturing, **Conestoga Wood Specialties** offers a complete selection of door and drawer fronts to fit a wide array of kitchen and bathroom needs, from traditional raised panel doors to more contemporary slab doors to suit any design style.
conestogawood.com

6. Woven wire grilles from **Architectural Products by Outwater, LLC** can add rich textural interest and provide a stylish way of concealing cabinet contents, according to the company, especially when used in combination with metal mesh backing.
outwater.com

7. Architectural Glass Effects offers a wide variety of decorative glass options for cabinet inserts, including the AGE 457 Helix, a textured clear glass with a modern look, and the AGE 7770 Morocco (shown), an antique mirror style cabinet insert or backsplash option.
arcglasseffects.com

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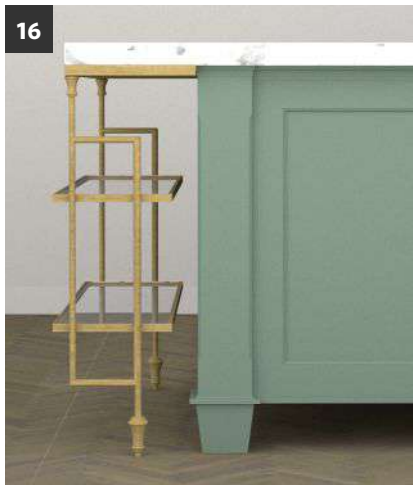
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Photo: @angelarosehome

8. Caron Industries has updated the classic Shaker style door for its Simply Shaker line, which features a slimmer ¾" frame for a more contemporary appeal. The frame is wider on the back at two inches to facilitate hinge install. The doors are available in a wide variety of wood types and colors.
caronindustries.com

9. REHAU's RAUVISIO terra soft, textured HPL surface is now offered in four collections – Daybreak, Midday, Evenfall and Twilight. Custom cabinet doors in the engineered wood surface feature double-sided HPL sealed with REHAU LaserEdge adhesive-free edgebanding for a monolithic real-wood appearance. Doors are highly resistant to scratches, impact, chemicals, heat, moisture and UV damage, according to the company.
rehau.com

10. Bradco Stainless Products has expanded its stainless under-sink liners to now allow cut outs and notches for plumbing and other obstacles that often arise with custom installations. Each liner is made to order with a full lip on all sides for liquid containment, making them an ideal solution for protecting base cabinets from water damage and traffic, says the company.
bradcostainless.com

11. The Kitchen Tower from **Häfele** delivers storage with contents available from three-sides, and features integrated soft-close hardware. The base cabinet towers are available in 18" and 24" sizes, and each features trays, dividers and holders for high-functioning storage. Available finishes include anthracite and silver, and the towers are designed for frameless cabinet construction only.
hafele.com

12. Crafted sustainably with sides sourced from discarded material, **Keystone Wood Specialties'** solid maple Bee-Line Dovetailed Drawers are a high-quality, lower-cost option. Available in standard 1" height increments and with custom widths and depths, Bee-Line drawers can be ordered with laser engraving, notching for undermount slides, handle cutouts and as one of Keystone's specialty storage drawer boxes.
keystonewood.com

13. ExactMade offers ExactMats, precision-made shelf and drawer protectors. The thick, nearly invisible liners drop into place, showcasing the intended aesthetic of the surface without hiding it. The mats prevent damage, dampen sound and absorb impact, says the company, and are FDA compliant and GREENGUARD Gold Certified.
exactmats.com

14. Richelieu's BPO II Universal Base Cabinet Pull-Out frame is adjustable from 24"-32" in height and can be both top and bottom mounted inside a face-frame or frameless cabinet. The BPO II frame is compatible with various accessories, with wire baskets to keep food items close at hand or to help with food prep with supports for baking sheets and a spice rack.
richelieu.com

15. Northern Contours is an approved manufacturer of cabinet components in FENIX material, now with an expanded North American offering. FENIX is a soft-touch matte material featuring nanotechnology that is anti-static with thermal healing of scratches and is heat and abrasion resistant. Northern Contours offers four stocked FENIX neutrals, as well as 12 additional colors with extended lead time.
northerncontours.com

16. Designed to enhance cabinetry like statement jewelry, the Fittings End Caps collection from **Fittings Metal Collection** features end caps for wall, tall, island and base cabinets. Each is available in a range of heights and widths, and the island end cap features two tempered glass shelves.
fittingscollection.com

17. In collaboration with Angela Rose Home, **Nieu Cabinet Doors** has released the new Angela Rose Slim Shaker Cabinets. The budget-friendly doors feature easy installation, enabling them to be used on existing cabinet boxes, and are available in 16 door styles and 14 colors.
nieucabinetdoors.com

LANDSCAPE-INSPIRED QUARTZ SURFACING

The Dramatic Landscapes Collection from **Wilsonart** delivers six new quartz countertop designs based on some of the world's most majestic places. Included in the line are: Fossa Falls, a soft white background with short waves of foggy gray; Hekla Slope, white fragments set in a soft gray background; Gardar Basalt, a mid-tone gray with darker gray particulates, and Volcanic Glacier (shown), a deep black with white veins. The quartzite-inspired surfaces include Hafn Harbour, with a sandy background with white veining, and Vicentia, a soft white background with bright white veins. | *wilsonart.com*

REIMAGINED FAUCET

Gessi has reimagined its well-known Rettangolo Faucet Collection with the introduction of the Rettangolo K. The faucet features a sleek diagonal line that bisects the body, reshaping the silhouette and evoking the form of a futuristic K. The single-lever design is available in 15 different configurations to complement basins, tubs, bidets and showers, in an array of finishes including copper, chrome, polished nickel and brushed black metal.
gessi.com

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT INSPIRED FAUCET LINE

Brizo's new line – the Frank Lloyd Wright Bath Collection – channels the artistry and enduring influence of the iconic architect. Developed in collaboration with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, the full bath suite embraces the six principles of organic architecture: simplicity, individuality, belonging, palette, substance and integrity. The faucet, which is available in a range of metal finishes and can be paired with wood options, features a cantilevered spout and side-stream water flow.
brizo.com

CHARCOAL FINISH

NativeStone products from **Native Trails** are now available in Charcoal – a rich, matte black finish – joining Ash, Pearl, Earth and Slate. Every NativeStone piece, including sinks and tubs, is artisan-made from a sustainable blend of natural fiber and cement and comes with one-of-a-kind coloration.
nativetrailshome.com

TOUCHLESS FILTERED WATER

The HydroTap Touch-Free Wave by **Zip Water** allows for the operation of the tap with the wave of a hand. A more hygienic approach by reducing touchpoints in the home, the HydroTap uses smart sensing technology to deliver instant, pure tasting, filtered water without touching the faucet.
us.zipwater.com

CABINET TILT DOWN TRAY

Wood-Mode continues to add to its collection of design and storage options to keep kitchens both beautiful and functional. The Stainless Steel Tilt Down Tray is a small tray that functionalizes the front of the kitchen sink, tilting out for storage of sponges, brushes and other cleaning items. The tray is available in all standard cabinet widths.
wood-mode.com

SUSTAINABLE MARBLE-LOOK QUARTZ

Four marble-inspired designs that recreate the patterns of the sky comprise Silestone's new Ethereal Collection, which is made with sustainable HybriQ+ Technology. Developed by **Cosentino**, Ethereal's four colorways showcase fine lines in deep hues against a white canvas, capturing the color and light seen in the sky. Ethereal Dusk features a bluish-toned veining; Ethereal Haze (shown) includes a range of gray tones; Ethereal Glow is an evolution of Eternal Calacatta Gold, with golden and gray veining, while Ethereal Noctis showcases short gray and black veins. | *cosentino.com*

FLEXIBLE KITCHEN FAUCET

Futuristic design is reflected in the KANTA Dual Function Kitchen Faucet, created by Ronen Joseph Design Studio for **HamatUSA**. The fixture works as a rotating faucet while seated in the base, and as a fully hand-held faucet when removed. The faucet features a push-button activation, integral rotating dial for temperature control, and a dual-spray that allows for seamless switching between spray and regular water flow. KANTA is available in six different finish combinations, including brushed brass, brushed nickel, polished brass and polished chrome with black sleeve and brushed nickel and polished chrome with silver sleeve. | *hamatusa.com*

MODERN BATH FAUCET OPTIONS

The D Street modular bath faucet collection, which pays homage to the casual-yet-modern D Street surf community in Encinitas, California, mixes elements such as smooth, knurled or carbon fiber inserts with modern style spouts and handles. The range of options for the all-brass collection from **California Faucets** includes three spout styles in three sizes: the arc style Medium and High spouts, plus the more angular double-bend Quad spout. Handle options include the cylindrical Stick and the more geometric, tapered Tang, with textured handle insert options.
calfaucets.com

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Historic Kitchen Gets Fresh Look

BEFORE

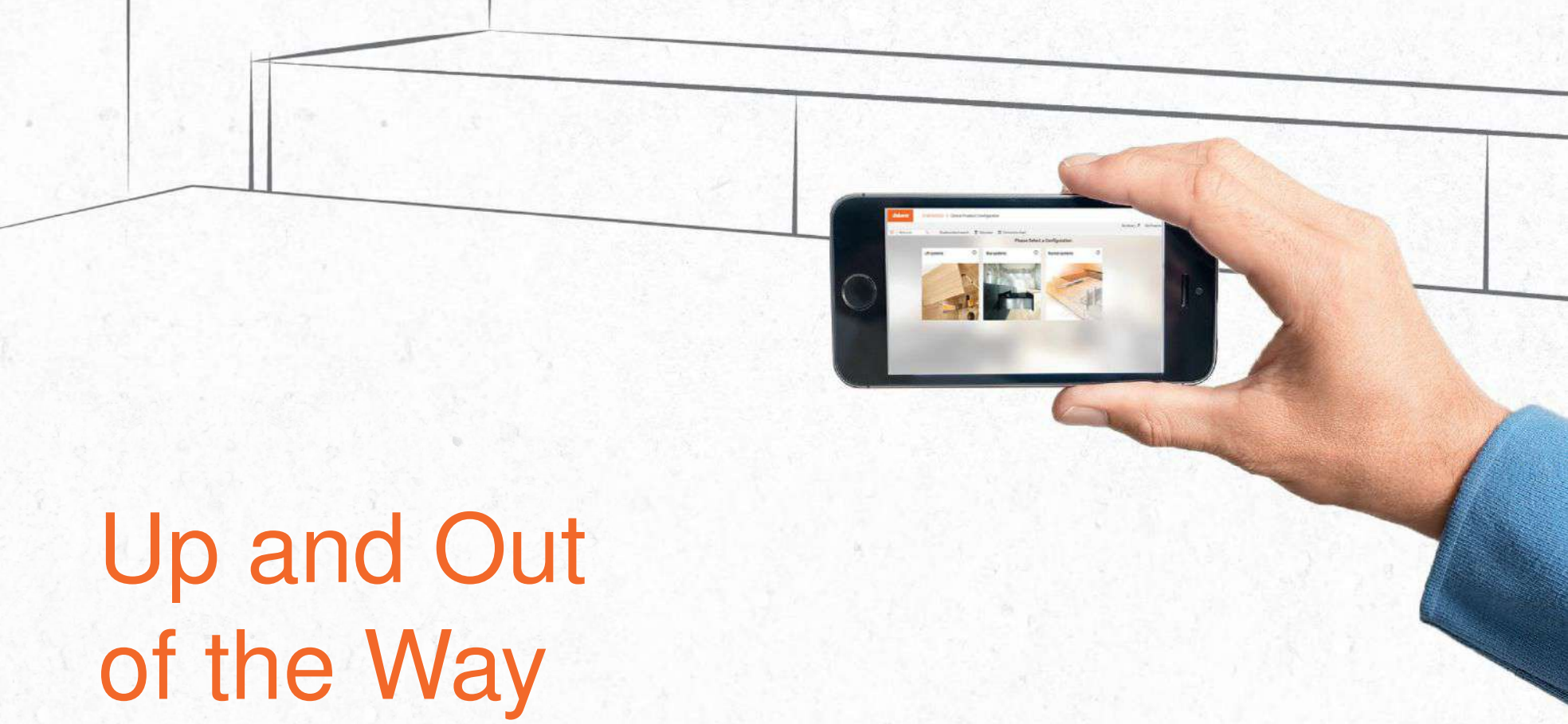
Located in Birmingham, AL, this historic Tudor-style home was built in the 1920s and is owned by the president of a tea company that has been in operation since 1946 – both factors that informed the remodel of its kitchen. The clients desired a space that would deliver modern functionality and an updated design while honoring the home's historic nature. Additionally, because the tea company places family focus as a high priority, the clients wanted to reflect that in the space as well. Due to the era in which the home was built, the kitchen was closed-off and awkward, not at all ideal for entertaining guests.

After Photos: Jean Allsopp Photography

AFTER

The clients wanted a more open feel for the kitchen without entirely sacrificing the historic layout – open but not too open – which was achieved by moving the walls back and recessing them into an existing laundry room without eliminating separation. By rotating the orientation of the island and increasing its size, a more functional flow was created in the space that better caters to entertainment and family-centric activities. Bright white walls and marble bring the design into the 21st century, while finishes and fixtures with an antiqued feel were chosen in order to blend with and enhance the history of the home.

View more after photos at KitchenBathDesign.com



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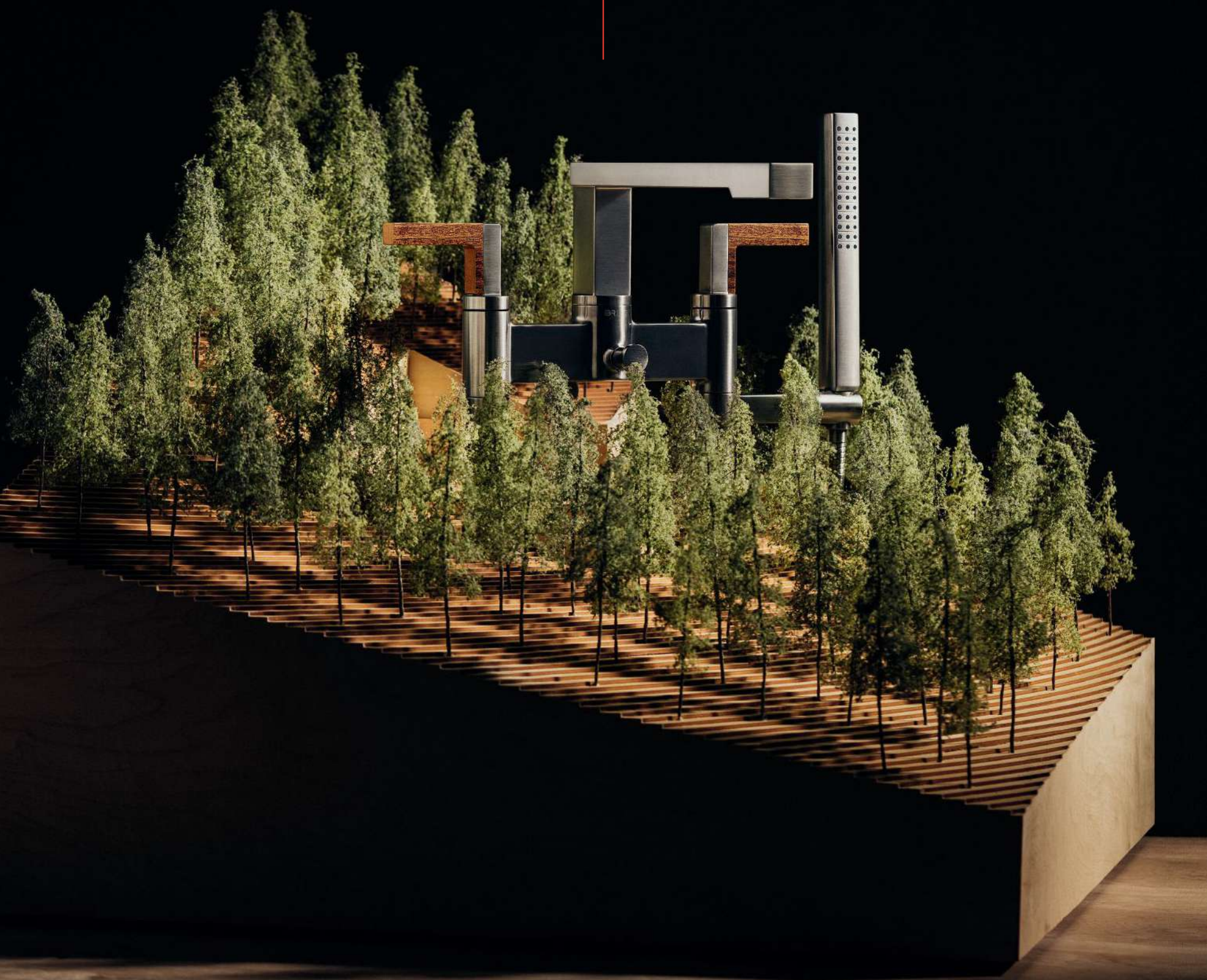

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